

THE EPHEMERA OF DISSIDENT MEMORY: REMEMBERING MILITARY
VIOLENCE IN 21ST-CENTURY AMERICAN WAR CULTURE

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Bryan Thomas Walsh

THE EPHEMERA OF DISSIDENT MEMORY: REMEMBERING MILITARY

VIOLENCE IN 21ST-CENTURY AMERICAN WAR CULTURE

The militarization of 21st-century American society is an entrenched and volatile system of institutional and cultural power, one that is not likely to go away despite the national fantasy that withdrawing US troops from foreign territories will inaugurate a new era of peace and return us to “the way things were.” This dissertation explores the domestic and transnational legacies of the “War on Terror,” arguing that America’s contemporary war campaigns are waged in part against the memories of state-sanctioned military violence and those oft-overlooked populations who struggle against it. I argue that increasingly expansive atmospheres of US military violence prompts state institutions to govern the norms through which war-torn populations can make sense of personal loss and attribute significance to the complex histories of America’s prolonged military campaigns. More importantly, the dissertation will also bring attention to those ephemeral but nonetheless vital acts of dissident memory that populations engender in order to negotiate, contest, and occasionally dismantle the conditions of state-sanctioned military violence that routinely compromise the safety and integrity of their lives.

The case studies that comprise this project include: the bereaved who mourn the deaths of U.S. soldiers at official military cemeteries and vernacular memorials (chapter 2); civilian communities who live adjacent to US military facilities that dump vast amounts of toxins into their ecological environments (chapter 3); and (un)documented Latinos/as who persistently confront increasingly militarized US-Mexico borderlands (chapter 4). By attending to each these war-torn populations and the spaces of their attrition, I argue that America’s war on terrorism is increasingly becoming a war on memory, as it is precisely this site of cultural struggle where US military institutions strive to sustain power and communities vie for a less dismal future.

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Chapter 1

“Wartime Matters”

It was August 25th, 2004 – Carlos Arredondo’s birthday. He spent the day tinkering around his home in Hollywood, Florida, awaiting a phone call from his son who was serving a tour of duty in Iraq, when a government vehicle approached his home. Three marine officers stepped out of the car, walked solemnly toward Carlos, and informed him that his son, Lance Cpl. Alexander Arredondo, died after a bullet pierced his left temple during “hostilities” in Najaf. It was Alexander’s second tour of duty in Iraq. Rampant with heartbreak, Carlos grabbed a sledgehammer and torch from his garage, along with several tanks of gasoline and propane, and marched toward the government vehicle. He shattered the windows of the vehicle first. Then he forced himself inside, splashed the interior with gasoline, and sparked a match, setting himself and the vehicle ablaze. It only took a second or two for the propane tank to explode. Initially confounded by Carlos’s grief-stricken fury, the military officers eventually grappled Carlos from the incinerated vehicle, but not before flames consumed most of his body. Once Alex “returned home,” Carlos attended his funeral in a stretcher.

After ten months of physical rehabilitation, Alex’s death continued to weigh heavily on Carlos and, in the Spring of 2005, he consecrated his truck as a mobile memorial for Alex, traversing cities across the United States in order to “share my mourning with the American people.”¹ The memorial consists of a flag-draped coffin that carries Alex’s prized possessions such as a soccer ball, a toy truck, a pair of shoes, a Winnie the Pooh doll, and a military uniform. Carlos parks his car in popular thoroughfares and sits quietly by the makeshift memorial for hours at a time, occasionally interacting with those who find themselves moved by the display.

One passerby observed that “the display is sad, personal and emotionally jarring.”² During an interview, Carlos defined his memorial thusly:

This is my pain. This is my loss . . . I start[ed] doing [this] for my own personal healing process . . . And it’s a way for me to share this grieving with the public, because many people live in their own bubbles, and they don’t care really about what’s going on outside their own bubbles, and I want them to feel what they see, what really happens every day . . . all over the country.”³

For Carlos, the memorial both facilitates a “personal healing process” and serves as a vestige of the increasingly expansive atmospheres of loss and grief begotten by America’s 21st-century War on Terror. Communicating his grief and displaying the remnants of his son’s life is not simply a personal affair but also a political and ethical one: publicly commemorating and memorializing Alex’s death functions as an “emotionally jarring” reminder that death tolls are not simply a collection of numbers, that the friends and families of “the fallen” are not the only civilians who must shoulder the burden of loss, and that the path of a bullet does not end at its target. Carlos’s memorial to Alex is also animated by an impulse to challenge the general inability of Americans to comprehend the gravity of military violence (i.e., “feel what they see”). Milan Kundera once wrote that “the struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting.”⁴ Similarly for Carlos, allowing troubling histories of military violence to go unnoticed only exacerbates the catastrophic undoing of America’s war machine. If forgetting lives lost to war is politics “by other means,” then Carlos’s ceremony of grief and memory serves as a dissident activity, if for no other reason than it refuses to allow a troubling history of US military violence to vanish and disappear.

It has been over a decade since Carlos immolated himself and then began to publicly memorialize his son as a casualty of America’s “War on Terror.” A lot of has changed since

then. Governments have been toppled and dictators executed. ISIS has emerged as the new face of global terrorism, even as Al-Qaeda and the Taliban remain a target of US military operations. The American people elected Barack Obama as their new President, and he waged military campaigns in both old and new conflict zones. Thousands of US troops died in combat, and tens of thousands more “returned home” in various conditions of life and death.⁵

However, even as US military operations seem to have receded since 2004, America’s 21st-century war on terrorism casts a long shadow over American ideals. Underneath the veneer of military triumphalism or “the past is passed-ness” resides war-torn civilian populations that struggle to endure the legacies of war. Consider some examples: more veterans have died by suicide than by combat-related injuries, and many VA clinics are incapable of providing adequate care to veterans; sexual assault and rape are now considered “combat-related traumas,” because the US military ignored and redacted thousands of incidents of sexual assault within the ranks; drone warfare has expanded the limits of executive power to allow for the murder of civilians, accidental or otherwise; noncitizen soldiers have been removed from their families and deported after service; and the economic burdens of perpetual war-making have severely stripped government subsidies from vital social services.⁶ This cursory glimpse into the “costs of war” captures a fundamental condition of post-9/11 American culture.

Corresponding to the expansion of military power is the redistribution of military violence across an array of military *and* civilian populations. From the soldier to the civilian, the police officer to the activist, the Border Patrol agent to the migrant, the drone pilot to the people they monitor – the fog of America’s global war against terrorism covers evermore people and places. War and its consequences, in other words, has not subsided as much as it has proliferated

throughout America's post-9/11 political landscape. Carlos' efforts to make sense of and memorialize the loss of his son is but one more war-torn story that fits within the mounting saga of America's seemingly endless time of war.

This project explores civilians' war-torn stories in an effort to capture the ongoing legacies of US military violence and power following the September 11th, 2001 terrorist attacks in United States. The fulcrum of my analysis hinges on the problem of American public memory and forgetting, and the myriad ways that communities commemorate contemporary histories of US war-making in hopes of dismantling those manifestation of US military violence and power that endanger their lives. To investigate communities' attempts to memorialize suffering caused by US militarism is an urgent matter, because it is precisely those troubling histories of state-sanction suffering that seem so susceptible to disappearing from the public record. Indeed, as US civilians march forth into the second decade of the war on terrorism, they are faced with an increasingly expansive atmosphere of state-sanctioned military violence, prompting state institutions to govern the rhetorical norms through which communities make sense of loss and attribute significance to the past. What is at stake are the memories of military violence and the increasingly restrictive norms through which such memories can be expressed and circulated. To say that state institutions govern the norms through which communities make sense of the past is not to say that America is bereft of public acts of commemoration and remembrance *vis-à-vis* war. On the contrary, Americans routinely commemorate the history of war in films, literature, monuments, and so many other expressive forms. The problem, however, is that such commemorative habits frequently reduce the complex and variegated histories of US military violence to a near-programmatic affirmation of

the heroism, courage, and sacrifice of the US soldier and nation-state for which the soldier fought and died. What gets lost in such memory practices are those histories of US military violence that evidence some of the more complex and unsettling consequences of US war-making and, in so doing, compromise Americans' allegiance to the US military and its campaigns. It is precisely people like Carlos who found themselves afflicted by the machinations of contemporary US militarism. His makeshift memorial – however ephemeral – demonstrates one of the ways in which war-torn civilians have crafted dissident memories in an effort to remember suffering and loss *otherwise*.

My primary contention in this project is that 21st-century wars exacted by the United States are waged against the memories of state-sanctioned military violence as well as those oft-overlooked communities who struggle against it. The questions that drive my investigation are as follows: How have America's 21st-century wars been waged through a strategically-crafted imagining of the nation's past, and what rhetorical weapons has the state used to exact its objectives? What contemporary histories of US military violence and power have been systematically forgotten, and why? What communities find themselves afflicted by 21st-century junctures of military violence and power? How have those communities crafted dissident memories in an effort to dismantle the state-sanctioned conditions that compromise their lives? And most importantly: to what extent did these communities succeed in making their lives less disposable in the face of a mounting political assault by US military institutions? In order to explore these questions, I will examine the discursive techniques of military power that function as an extension of explicit manifestations of US military violence. I will also explore those ephemeral and dissident commemorative practices through which particular populations

seek to reconfigure their proximities to military violence and power. I follow Walter Benjamin's program to "seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger," to interrogate those "document[s] of civilization" that are at the same time "document[s] of barbarism" so as to "brush history against the grain."⁷ Accordingly, my intention is to explore those ephemeral but nonetheless vital acts of dissident memory that vulnerable populations engender in order to negotiate, contest, and occasionally dismantle the conditions of vulnerability to military violence that routinely compromise the safety and integrity of their lives. If there is a lesson to be gleaned in these preliminary pages, it is this: if wars begin with the shot of a gun, then the histories of war begin only after the bullet hits its target.

The Proliferation of War-Torn Bodies and Landscapes and America's Immemorial Gaze

The militarization of US civilian life is an entrenched and accelerating system of institutional and cultural power, one that is not likely to go away despite the national fantasy that withdrawing troops from faraway lands will inaugurate a new era of peace and return us to "the way things were." While the "military industrial complex" has grown exponentially since the early 20th century, the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks served as an unequivocal impetus for catalyzing the decades-long restructuring of American political and public life according to the values and interests of US military power, at once accelerating forces already in motion as well as introducing new political structures.⁸ The presumptive division between the state (military) and society (civilian life) has all but dissolved due to the "normalized interpenetration" and alarmingly diffuse influence of military power across diverse facets of everyday life, including government, commerce and consumption, labor, media communications, education and research, environmental sustainability, and immigration.⁹

Nevertheless, the somewhat vapid recognition that military power infiltrates 21st-century American culture does not go far enough; the issue instead is that articulations between US military power and everyday life proliferate heterogeneous junctures of military violence across the body politic. “Military violence,” herein defined, refers to those institutional, technological, and discursive military practices that engender and sustain contextually specific “atmosphere[s]” of vulnerability and precarity which, in turn, subject particular communities – both military and civilian – to various conditions and intensities of suffering, attrition, and death.¹⁰ This modality of military violence is not only a discreet event that unfolds beyond “the homeland.” It is also a dynamic assemblage of institutions, techniques, and discourses that organize and corrode the everyday lives of civilian populations throughout the national landscape.¹¹ While the particular forms and intensities of military violence will vary from juncture to juncture, one feature remains constant: military power is endangering, harming, wearing down, and sometimes even killing the very same civilians it is sworn to protect.¹²

American civilians, then, ordinarily confront increasingly expansive atmospheres of state-sanctioned violence, prompting the state to govern the rhetorical norms and symbolic repertoires through which communities can narrate, put into expression, and make sense of pervasive economies of terror, war, and suffering. It should come as little surprise, then, that many of the rhetorical norms of the post-9/11 zeitgeist regularly carry out *le raisons d'État* by rationalizing the pervasiveness of military power and the orchestration of military violence. For example, discourses of terror exacerbate a palpable fear that a catastrophic threat to national security is always-already on the brink of emergence.¹³ The rhetorical achievement of the “terrorist threat” is that it need not meet the criteria of empirical verifiability in order to

generate national fears and anxieties. Instead, rhetoric invests the possibility of a terrorist threat with affective power by articulating it as an unpredictable but nonetheless hidden danger, “[that] will have been real because it was *felt* to be real.”¹⁴ State-sanctioned discourse validates the fear and threat of terror by fashioning an enemy who serves as the intended target of, and justification for, US military violence.¹⁵ However, if the threat of terror is itself unpredictable, then who comes to embody that threat is equally uncertain and subject to dispute and imagination, often under conditions fraught with panic and confusion.

Consequently, who does and does not count as an “enemy” is persistently reformulated and redefined. Although the “enemy” emblem is frequently applied to “WMD-wielding extremists,” it is also applied to various populations including Muslim and Muslim-looking Americans, Syrian refugees, documented and undocumented Latino/a migrants, news agencies such as *Al Jazeera*, and almost any critic of US foreign policy, including human rights advocates, left-wing professors and intellectuals, AWOL soldiers, “whistleblowers,” and the list goes on. A troubling consequence of such enemy-making discourse is that it publicizes only the intended targets of military violence. The comparative invisibility of Iraqi and Afghan civilian casualties, the suicides at the Guantanamo Bay detention facility, the thousands of (un)reported cases of sexual assault and rape within the ranks, the deaths of migrant populations along militarized borderlands, and the contaminated communities who live adjacent to toxic military facilities all serve as representative examples of populations who endure devastating manifestations of military violence while achieving little to no national recognition. Animated by affective and discursive economies of threat, national security, and enemy-making, these rhetorical norms embolden US military power by justifying, vindicating, and concealing the prevailing

atmospheres of state-sanctioned violence in the post-9/11 zeitgeist. In framing events as unpredictable and populations as potential enemies of catastrophic proportion, 21st-century US war discourse commands civilians to endorse an exponential growth in a dynamic military apparatus that will presumably eviscerate the threat of terror and return the United States back to its imagined way of life.¹⁶ US military hegemony, in short, sustains itself in part by regulating the rhetorical mechanisms through which populations can make sense out of junctures of military violence.

At stake in these increasingly insidious economies of 21st-century US military power are the available rhetorical norms and symbolic repertoires through which populations can narrate and put into expression the ways that military violence has painfully but nonetheless routinely organized and deteriorated their lives.¹⁷ Since military violence unfolds for many civilian populations not as discreet events but as broader sagas of precarity and attrition, memories of military violence haunt the everyday lives of civilians. Accordingly, junctures of military violence have histories, and US military war culture works vigorously to restrict the stories, discourses, and rituals through which civilians can commemorate and circulate such histories. What the first decade of the 21st century has shown is that US military power assaults populations with its *immemorial* gaze as much as it does with its weapons, consigning to historical oblivion those “casualties” of military violence who call into question the legitimacy of US military hegemony. What is also at stake, then, are the dissident memories of 21st-century US military violence that trouble triumphalist narratives of US military power and the increasingly restrictive rhetorical norms through which such memories can be remembered and publicized.

As many scholars have argued, the patriotic and “official” norms of US rhetorical culture compulsively commemorate a “glorious heritage” of “great deeds” (e.g., mythical narratives of heroism, self-sacrifice, and civic virtue) while systematically forgetting sordid and barbaric military histories (e.g., the extermination of Native Americans, the internment of Japanese Americans during WWII).¹⁸ As James Young rightly notes, “state-sponsored memory of a national past aims to affirm the righteousness of a nation’s birth, even its divine election. The matrix of a nation’s monuments employs the story of ennobling events, of triumphs over barbarism, and recalls the martyrdom of those who gave their lives in the struggle for national existence.”¹⁹ Even while the “relationship between a state and its memorials is not one-sided,” state-sponsored memorials often seek to “concretize particular historical interpretations” that legitimize the “state’s seemingly natural right to exist.”²⁰ Moreover, George Mosse argues that patriotic national discourses tend to mythologize war, thereby providing the nation with a “new depth of religious feeling, putting at its disposal ever-present saints and martyrs, places of worship, and a heritage to emulate.”²¹ These sedimented rhetorical norms for selectively recollecting histories of US military violence produce, in Benedict Anderson’s words, “an imagined political community” that commands “profound emotional legitimacy.”²² The “American People,” in other words, are not defined once and for all according to arbitrary lines on a map, geographical formations, or even some primordial spirit or genetic makeup. What it means to be “American” is an historically contingent discursive construction of social belonging forged through ordinary and emotional cultural rituals of remembering and forgetting. And yet, while national identities are mercurial fictions (e.g., “the American People”) that frequently undergo reformulation, they nonetheless consolidate disparate populations around feelings of

belonging to a particular rendition of US history, a feeling and mode of belonging that is so powerful that it convinces members to fight in military conflicts and “die for such limited imaginings.”²³

Selective interpretations of the histories of military violence not only produce definitions of US national identity, but also forge particular relationships between and amongst disparate populations, state institutions, and conditions of vulnerability and privilege. Indeed, one of the principle material consequences engendered by the dynamics between national identity, histories of military violence, and rhetorics of remembrance is the production of sociopolitical relationships between subjects (e.g., civilians, soldiers, undocumented workers) and dominant institutions (e.g., military bases, governmental agencies). If “affiliation” is the “principle affective modality of public memory,” as Greg Dickinson, Carole Blair and Brian Ott suggest, then it is imperative for scholars working within the humanities to investigate the ways in which particular commemorative symbols and rituals of national and personal remembrance create social and political relationships between citizens and governing institutions, as it is precisely these affiliations that simultaneously energize and debilitate political agency.²⁴ For example, Bradford Vivian, Marita Sturken, and Michael Butterworth argue in their respective analyses that particular commemorative events (9/11 anniversaries), commodities (kitsch), and memorials (*The Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum*) constitute modalities of patriotic feeling and national belonging that aggressively disregard “sociopolitical inequity,” the perpetuation of military violence, and historical “moments of discord and unrest.”²⁵ Additionally, James P. McDaniel offers a prescient assessment of state-sanctioned memories, arguing that US patriotic remembrance is fundamentally “perverse,” insofar as it frames the destruction of other

populations during times of war as pleasurable and erotic. Patriotic discourses, McDaniel observes, ask US civilians to take enjoyment in rituals of purification that depend on scapegoating other groups of people so as to reconstitute and stabilize particular notions of national identity.²⁶ Such observations suggest that prevailing commemorative habits of post-9/11 US culture affirm the perpetuation of US military power through rhetorics of glory and sacrifice as well as deflect attention from more shameful and complicated dimensions of American military history. It is through habits of commemoration that national cultures (1) memorialize histories of military heroism (while forgetting its deeds of malice) and (2) invest modes of national belonging with such emotional force that its members are willing to go to war to defend it. As a result, to interrogate the “official” commemorative rhetorics through which populations imagine themselves as “the People” vis-à-vis the military apparatuses is absolutely imperative.²⁷

Yet, public memory, in Marita Sturken’s words, is a “field of cultural negotiation” through which communities interact with a range of “technologies of memory” that produce competing conceptions of national identity.²⁸ Since discourses of national memory generate only partial perspectives with which diverse populations can make sense of the past, “official” frameworks for commemorating military violence and power are often subject to ideological contestation and cultural struggle.²⁹ Even as public memories of the past frequently materialize in stone and parade under a banner of “History,” the meanings attributed to those interpretations are never static or fixed across time and space. The task, therefore, is not only to identify the dominant commemorative techniques (i.e., “amnesic rhetoric”) through which the US military ensures its hegemony.³⁰ Instead, we must also attend to those dissident

commemorative tactics that call into question the dominance of military power, thereby opening a space for different national imaginings, sociopolitical relationships, and conditions of vulnerability to military violence. It is worth emphasizing that the difference between “official” memories and dissident memories is not derived by *who* is remembering as much as by the content of the memory. Put differently, communities who are directly harmed by US military violence may nonetheless endorse the state (e.g., noncitizen soldiers). Likewise, proxies of the state (e.g., US soldiers) may problematize or complicate some of the dominant commemorative traditions of the state. The issue, therefore, is not to presume a concrete division between dominant and dissident memories as much as explore the “field of negotiation” through which public memories are forged.

Since the expansive reach of US military power redistributes conditions of suffering, attrition, and death across a diverse range of civilian populations and geographies, two of the most vital arenas in which struggles over histories of military violence unfold involve “war-torn bodies and landscapes.” In general, “war-torn bodies and landscapes” refer to those populations and environments that have been ripped asunder and painfully reconstituted due to their proximity to particular junctures of US military violence. As noted earlier, when US civilians conjure images of military violence, they usually think of US soldiers and terrorist-enemies killing each other in the cityscapes of Iraq or the mountains of Afghanistan. While these populations and geographies are undoubtedly ripped apart by military munitions, “war-torn bodies and landscapes” herein defined also call attention to the myriad civilian populations and environments whose livelihood and integrity are manipulated, tormented, and even abandoned by particular industries, technologies, and discourses of military power. Examples

of war-torn bodies can include friends and families of servicemen and servicewomen who died in combat (chapter 1), communities (often poor people of color) who live downwind from toxic military bases (chapter 2), undocumented Latino/a migrants trying to survive within aggressively remilitarized borderlands (chapter 3), employees who depend upon precarious forms of military labor, men and women vulnerable to sexual assault and rape by state employees stationed at nearby military bases, American communities subjected to a powerfully militarized law enforcement apparatus, foreign nationals who live under the constant fear that loved ones residing in occupied territories may be accidentally shot and killed, and so on. War-torn landscapes thus include a wide range of geographies such as state-sanctioned and ephemeral war memorials (chapter 1), environments contaminated by the toxic military bases (chapter 2), remilitarized borderlands (chapter 3), local economies driven primarily by military labor and consumption, occupied territories, et cetera. Different intensities of torment, loss, and subjugation will depend on the particular articulations between structural inequalities and regimes of military power, and a multitude of non-military populations and landscapes across the country play an integral and sometimes tragic role within the broader histories of 21st-century US military violence.³¹

Specifically, I understand war-torn bodies and landscapes as politically salient sites of cultural struggle where conflicting institutions and communities lay claim to “truths” about histories of US military violence that authorize, legitimate, and occasionally even resist the perpetuation of military power. Given that “war is, first and last, a bodily truth,” both military institutions and war-torn populations invest an immense amount of importance in appropriating and safeguarding the memories of state-sanctioned suffering, attrition, and

death.³² One example would be how official commemorative practices “flag” corpses of US soldiers and veterans so as to embolden the virtues of military service while ignoring the United States military’s role in engineering a misguided war (chapter 1).³³ In contrast, the bereaved occasionally resist such conventional codes, choosing instead to commemorate dead soldiers as a consequence of a deranged military regime. However, state-sanctioned commemorative rituals and symbols do not allocate the same legitimacy to all war-torn bodies. Some war-torn bodies, in fact, are more frequently dressed in symbols that deflect grief or remembrance. For example, US border agents often codify (un)documented Latina/o migrants as “threats” that warrant military violence, in spite of the fact these migrants pose absolutely no terroristic threat (chapter 3). Indeed, that so many war-torn bodies and landscapes are often forgotten or ignored by popular discourse is itself a testament to the stranglehold that US military power has over the histories of US military violence.

Because competing histories of military violence find expression through the codification of particular war-torn bodies, it is perhaps not surprising that institutions and populations circulate such bodies across various landscapes in an effort to shape the attitudes and perspectives with which broader audiences make sense out of histories of military violence. Memory places (as noted earlier) are structures of power that elicit particular rituals and habits of interaction between communities, architectural features, and objects with effect of staging selective encounters with the past.³⁴ It is obvious that military institutions “sanctify” domestic landscapes with an abundance of state-sanctioned war memorials and cemeteries in order to regulate the formal motifs and rituals of commemoration.³⁵ Less obvious are those systematically guarded spaces of military power where particular populations confront

everyday mechanisms of military violence and then choose to enact dissident commemorative performances. Across the national landscape, communities have assembled an array of ephemeral memorials, commemorative displays, and other vernacular memory places dedicated to publicly remembering the loss of life engendered by particular junctures of military violence.³⁶ For example, residents living downwind of a notoriously toxic Air Force base in San Antonio have erected ephemeral cenotaphs outside of their homes in order to publicize the perpetual loss of life that remains unacknowledged by military administrators (chapter 2). Despite the Air Force's interest in obliterating its "toxic legacy" in San Antonio, residents mark their bodies and landscapes as war-torn so as to mourn residents who have succumbed to death and illness. What these passing examples suggest is that the discourses, styles, artifacts, and rituals through which communities remember war-torn bodies and landscapes operate as volatile "acts of transfer."³⁷ It is precisely these acts of transfer that drive processes of cultural negotiation through which populations reinforce, complicate, and even dismantle the memories that embolden junctures of military violence and power.

In short, the war on terrorism is increasingly becoming a war on memory, one that is waged on the bodies of populations and the spaces of their attrition. It is precisely these sites of cultural struggle where military institutions strive to sustain power and communities vie for a less caustic future. By attending to various topographies of US military violence and power, as well as the rhetorics and rituals of remembrance therein, my aim is to delineate both the commemorative mechanisms of control deployed by US military proxies as well as the viscera and ephemera of dissident memory through which communities struggle against the conditions of US military violence and power that compromise the integrity of their lives.³⁸

Methodology and Case Studies: Crafting of a Critical History of Contemporary US Military Violence and Power.

Histories of military violence, then, are remembered through war-torn bodies and landscapes, and it is precisely such economies of discourse, affect, corporeality, space, and memory that sustain and occasionally challenge particular regimes of military violence and power. In addition to exploring this thesis across oft-neglected junctures of contemporary US military power, I aim to conduct and perform a mode of rhetorical critique that has two main objectives. First, I will interrogate the institutional, technological, and discursive processes through which junctures of military violence cohere. Second, I hope to facilitate the circulation of dissident tactics that, however ephemeral and episodic, nonetheless implicate the vitality and persistence of particular communities' livelihood.³⁹ In so doing, my ultimate goal is to assemble commemorative ephemera of war-torn bodies and landscapes so as to craft political histories of struggle against 21st-century US military violence and power.

In order to accomplish such a project, some important epistemological and ethical questions emerge: what materials/texts (e.g., state documents, testimonies, mementos) do I need to gather and examine and how I do access them? What sorts of obstacles will I face in trying to access government materials versus grassroots materials? To what extent can I identify and characterize the sorts of memories that circulate within these particular materials and contexts. How can I be so sure that my characterizations of public memories correspond to a given populations' personal memories? How can I measure the sociopolitical consequences of particular memories and their circulation? Perhaps most importantly, how am I justified to choose war-torn populations and landscapes while also excluding others? To address these

questions, it is important to consider the different degrees of cultural durability and significance assumed to memories that are state-sanctioned versus memories that are merely “ephemeral.”

To begin, state-sanctioned histories of war-torn bodies and landscapes often circulate with a high degree of cultural publicity (e.g., popular films, nationally sanctified memorial sites) and preservation (e.g., legal proceedings, libraries of military history, institutional inventories). Moreover, because of the possibility that audiences can make use of these histories in a variety of ways, state institutions rigidly restrict and regulate their production and reception, often through techniques of secrecy (e.g., redaction), surveillance (e.g., administrative oversight, clearance authorization), and coercion (e.g., enforcing censorship restrictions on news outlets and journalists). The rhetorical forms that military institutions deploy in order to mediate histories of war-torn bodies and landscapes may depend on the contextually specific exigencies of a particular juncture of military violence. Still, discursive techniques of commemoration almost always circulate with ease and popularity. An important feature spanning all my case studies involves locating the precise discursive and material mechanisms through which military institutions attempt to contain or conceal particularly troubling histories of war-torn bodies and landscapes. I will collect official histories of military violence from an array of sources such as administrative testimonials, military agencies’ public release statements, legal notices and judicial proceedings, state-financed scientific research, institutional ceremonies, and the spatial design of state-sanctioned memorials and commemorative landscapes. I will access these materials through newspapers, DOD websites, empirical data, public service announcements, public and private transcripts, and the occasional “freedom of information act” request. The

task before us, in short, is to track and interrogate the ways in which histories of military violence are put to use in the service of particular regimes of military power.⁴⁰

Dissident memories of war-torn bodies and landscapes, in contrast, circulate evanescently through more vernacular and mutable channels of circulation such as localized media (e.g., small newspapers, fliers and posters, blogs), community-based events and get-togethers, and temporary memorials (e.g., vigils, makeshift grave markers, or roadside epitaphs). War-torn communities rarely possess the material resources required to preserve the dissident memories that challenge the official narratives of military history, because structural inequalities govern many of the populations who occupy particularly lethal proximities to military violence. Frequently scattered across what Lauren Berlant refers to as “intimate public spheres,” dissident memories – especially those cherished by marginalized communities – commonly consist of the non-institutionalized “waste materials” of everyday life.⁴¹ The ephemera of dissident memory often cohere around temporary memorials and can include a variety of fleeting discourses (e.g., poorly documented stories about the past), objects (i.e., *memento mori*), performances (e.g., embodied rituals of remembrance), and spaces (e.g., temporary memorials) that escape archival capture.⁴²

What memories count as “ephemeral” and what memories count as “permanent” or “enduring” is not a natural phenomenon as much as a cultural struggle between competing groups vying for cultural recognition and power. As Diane Taylor reminds us, it is dangerous to fetishize state-sanctioned representations of military history as offering more permanent depictions of the past, because such assumptions naturalize the relations of state power that romanticize the “great deeds of winners” while consigning losers to oblivion.⁴³ Moreover, such

a fetishization of state-sanctioned memories also ignores the role of structural inequalities in restricting some communities' objects, experiences, and memories from achieving any institutional upkeep and popular cultural circulation. Ephemerality, then, is often distributed differentially, at least insofar as the histories of privileged identities and powerful institutions achieve greater degrees of historical legitimacy, whereas the dissident memories of marginalized communities may be cast away as civilization's garbage.

Attending to the ephemera of dissident memory foregrounds those spaces, objects, and discourses that military institutions often neglect, deteriorate, and even suppress in order to bolster its triumphalist narratives of US military power. While it is important to resist fetishizing ephemerality as an unequivocal tactic of the oppressed⁴⁴, exploring ephemeral dissident memories can nonetheless highlight the emergent, subjugated, and "microbe-like" actions of everyday life which agitate the contingencies, limits, and contradictions of state-sanctioned histories of military violence.⁴⁵ Writes José Esteban Muñoz:

Ephemera . . . is linked to alternate modes of textuality and narrativity like memory and performance: it is also of those things that remain after a performance, a kind of evidence of what has transpired but certainly not the thing itself. It does not rest on epistemological foundations but is instead interested in following traces, glimmers, residues, and specks of things. It is important to note that ephemera is a mode of proofing and producing arguments often worked by minoritarian culture and criticism makers . . . Ephemera . . . maintain experiential politics and urgencies long after these structures of feeling have been lived.⁴⁶

The ephemeral materials of dissident memory, therefore, offer a glimpse into the "residues" of resistance that subjugated populations enacted in the face of domineering structures of military violence and power. To access the ephemerality of dissident memory, I will examine three different cultural artifacts: (1) the spatial composition of grassroots memorials, (2) the

objects left therein, and (3) the on- and off-site recollections that particular communities publicize across a variety of media such as blogs, online videos and grassroots documentaries, newspapers, transcribed town hall meetings, commemorative events and protests documented by human rights organizations, and recorded oral histories. Whereas a careful analysis of the composition of particular memorial spaces (and the objects that comprise them) will suggest some of the ways that these memorials work on the embodied gestures and habits of visitors, attention to on- and off-site testimony will highlight the persistence and resonance of that work. Of particular importance to my analysis is listening carefully to the terms and idioms that war-torn populations employ in order to lend expressions to their memories. It is important to heed Gayatri Spivak's warning that it is problematic to assume that (a) subaltern subjects can simply enunciate the conditions of subordination and (b) that intellectuals can simply access a subaltern population's knowledge via personal testimony. Still, it is also important to give due weight to the testimonies and experiences of war-torn populations, especially when regimes of military power are constantly trying to silence and forget them.⁴⁷ Ultimately, by assembling a field of cultural struggle over the histories of particular war-torn bodies and landscapes, I hope to craft an archive of dissident memory that, however ephemeral, articulates a critical history of 21st-century US military culture.

Devising an archive for a project that aims to identify and map both (1) the oblique manifestations of military violence and (2) the oft-overlooked dissident memories that struggle against it is something of a *tragic* project, at least insofar as its ambitions are doomed to fail. Given the increasingly expansive distribution of military violence across a wide variety of contexts and populations, no book-length project could encompass the totality of dissident

commemorative practices against 21st-century US militarism. This project can responsibly explore only a few representative case studies that attend to the ongoing struggle of particular populations for survival against conditions of state-sanctioned violence. Accordingly, my efforts here will be at least partly implicated in reaffirming the very same systems of repression and neglect that it seeks to counteract. This point is worth underscoring: since US military power is sustained in large measure by concealing its subjugation of diverse populations to distinct conditions of vulnerability and suffering, my focus here on only three particular contexts implicitly elides other crisis-driven, dissident struggles against continual military violence. What follows, therefore, should not be taken as an exhaustive and comprehensive catalogue of commemorative struggles against military violence. Instead, it should be taken as a starting point from which to launch further inquiries into the dynamics of post-9/11 US military violence and dissent. There are many important stories to tell, but this project can only focus on three of them.

Rather than organizing this project according to a linear sequence – one that arranges each case study as though one history of military violence and power comes neatly before or after a different history – I’ve organized the case studies topically. Each chapter does not simply address a discrete historical moment but rather a specific juncture of 21st-century US military violence and power. The populations that comprise this project include: the bereaved who mourn the deaths of US soldiers at official military cemeteries and vernacular memorials (chapter 1); communities who live adjacent to toxic military bases (chapter 2); and (un)documented Latinos/as who persistently confront an increasingly militarized border apparatus (chapter 3). Each of these contexts and populations exemplify some of the ways in

which 21st-century military power redistributes conditions of violence to civilian populations. Whereas some populations are conventionally acknowledged as vulnerable to mechanisms of war (e.g., US soldiers and veterans), stories of troubled families and friends of dead soldiers, downwinders of toxic military facilities, and (un)documented Latinos/as receive only marginal degrees of publicity in US public culture. Against the erroneous assumption that military power is homogeneous and uniform, each of these case studies illustrates the diverse manifestations of military violence that cohere as a palpable consequence of a vast network of institutional policies and practices unique to post-9/11 American political culture. Furthermore, by illustrating the everyday execution of military violence and power within domestic contexts, these case studies also challenge the assumption that military violence is a discreet event that only unfolds outside of US borders. For the families and friends of dead soldiers, military power emerges not only through the loss of a loved one to war, but also through rigid disciplinary protocols that govern rituals through which the bereaved are expected to mourn loss. Moreover, whereas communities living in lands contaminated by toxic military practice must continually attend to the gradual degradation of bodily health, documented and undocumented Latino/a migrants must perpetually come face-to-face with border agents, systems of surveillance, and the looming threat of detainment and deportation. These three case studies, then, speak to some of the manifestations of US military violence and bodily suffering, as well as to the day-to-day efforts of vulnerable communities to endure their proximity to military control and violence. More importantly, what each case study demonstrates is that the execution of military violence is not reducible to the firing of a gun. It can be exacted through a variety of means (e.g., environmental degradation, anti-immigration border enforcement), and

one of the most powerful weapons at the US military's disposal is to control public recognition and remembrance of these lethal military practices.

To be sure, there is a troubling abundance of war-torn populations that regularly confront junctures of US military violence and power as well as craft dissident memories to dispute their vulnerability to it. Perhaps one of the most expansive and diverse war-torn populations involves the alarmingly high volume of communities living adjacent to territories occupied by the US military. Although there are some laudable studies concerning these populations, I do not attend to them in any detail here, because I want to direct our attention to those civilian populations *living within the United States* who are routinely injured by particular junctures of US military violence and power.⁴⁸ Within a United States context, another war-torn population that has received recent public attention includes US troops – especially servicewomen – who survived sexual assault and rape perpetrated by fellow soldiers. Although these particular survivors routinely confront a military apparatus bent on eviscerating the history of rape within the military from the public record, I do not directly attend to this population given their status as non-civilians.⁴⁹ There are, however, two civilian populations living within the United States who have been systematically injured and killed by particular manifestations of US military violence and power. First, Muslim civilians are a persistent target of xenophobic discourses, policies, and explicit acts of physical violence, especially in the wake of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. Second – and relatedly – black and African American civilians are increasingly vulnerable to being shot and killed by a law enforcement apparatus that has become powerfully remilitarized in recent years. Equipped with more effective and expansive arsenals, law enforcement (and ordinary civilians) now possess more

lethal means with which to kill the populations that have been marked as “threats” to the “American way of life.” Although popular discourses regularly publicize more (and more) stories of white civilians and white police officers using military-grade weapons to harass, harm, and murder Muslim Americans and black or African-Americans, I have yet to encounter a sustained and detailed study that articulates this permutation of violence as a consequence to the militarization of domestic life. Even though I don’t attend to that here, such work is urgently needed.

In order to examine the particular junctures of 21st-century US military violence and power that impose conditions of vulnerability, attrition, and survival on these war-torn bodies and landscapes, each chapter explores three primary themes. First, each chapter provides an historical contextualization of a juncture of 21st-century US military violence power. Although the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks undoubtedly catalyzed and conditioned monumental changes in American war culture, the simple fact of the matter is that most junctures of 21st-century US military violence and power have precedents in 20th-century American warfare. My reasons for providing these historical accounts is not simply a matter of accuracy and vapid acknowledgement. Instead, these antecedent contexts serve as the foundations upon which many 21st-century junctures were built. Therefore, the widespread ecological degradation and environmental racism of the US military in the 21st century (Chapter 2) cannot be sufficiently understood unless such conditions are anchored within Cold War political contexts. Similarly, the alarming extent to which US border apparatuses harm documented and undocumented Latino/a migrants has its basis in 20th-century xenophobic, anti-immigration policies. Exploring these preconditions of contemporary US military violence highlights the mechanisms of control

that subjugate war-torn populations. It also provides a more nuanced and substantive account of the possibilities and constraints through which communities vie for a less hopeless future.

Second, these three case studies also demonstrate the discursive mechanisms through which military institutions try to colonize memories of military violence *vis-à-vis* war-torn bodies and geographies of militarism. For example, after killing Latinos/as under suspicious circumstances, border patrol agencies frame the dead as “suspected-terrorists”. In framing dead migrants as “terrorist threats,” these discourses legitimate the unchecked execution of military violence on migrant bodies. In addition, military administrators often deploy inaccessible technical jargon to describe histories of toxic contamination, thereby restricting the circulation of that history, especially for communities who may be exposed to the contamination. The department of Army commemorates dead US soldiers at the Arlington National Cemetery as the apotheosis of national glory and heroic self-sacrifice, which has the power to deter visitors from recollecting the nation’s dubious motives to go to war in the first place. In the case studies under consideration here, military institutions commemorate war-torn bodies and topographies of military power through particular discursive techniques that justify state-sanctioned suffering and death.

Third and finally, each case study offers poignant demonstrations of vulnerable populations circulating dissident commemorative practices regarding the attrition and demise of human life *vis-à-vis* military power. These commemorative repertoires become important vehicles of dissident memory, because surviving communities codify and perform bodily pain within commemorative spaces (e.g., counter-memorials, toxic environments, the borderlands) so as remember the suffering that particular populations endured at the hands of deranged

military power. What is perhaps most significant is that each case study not only illustrates particular struggles over memories of military violence. They also demonstrate the vital role of dissident memories in forging social bonds and “imagined communities” that challenge the increasingly pervasive control of military power.

In chapter two, I show that dead soldiers return to the world of the living in transmuted form, as (1) symbolically consecrated matter and (2) politicized emblems of national identity. Metonyms of dead US soldiers are always entrenched within historical conditions of power and politics and their rhetorical force is conventionally exercised in the service of American nationalism. At least since the early 20th century, the memories of dead US soldiers have been codified into national emblems that invite a public allegiance to the US military and its operations. After first examining the histories of military cemetery design, I shift my analysis to attend to military cemeteries and ephemeral memorials that have been erected in the wake of the War on Terror. I argue that metonyms of dead U.S. soldiers at official military cemeteries and makeshift memorials recite and revise historically-entrenched military traditions in order to mediate the interstices between rituals of mourning 21st-century US military casualties, national commemorations of American warfare, and sociopolitical affiliations between citizens and military authorities. I conclude this chapter by evaluating families’ efforts to recodify these metonyms in order to forge dissident memories that do not simply affirm US war-making.

In chapter three, I argue that to wage a war is to coordinate violent military assaults against environments and the people who inhabit them. Americans, however, frequently presuppose that the relationships between 21st-century US militarism and environmental destruction materialize only in foreign territories as an unfortunate but nonetheless necessary

means for defeating the enemy and winning the war against terror. I argue that it is dangerously problematic to locate the environmental consequences of US military violence and power exclusively beyond US soil, because such a limited perspective obscures the powerful and pervasive role of 21st-century US militarism in subjecting American populations and landscapes to everyday conditions of toxicity. I explore this thesis within the context of the Kelly Air Force Base (Kelly AFB), a seemingly inconspicuous military installation in San Antonio, Texas that has exposed nearby populations to lethal carcinogens since the Cold War. This toxic military geography is a fruitful site for rhetorical critique, because it illustrates the discursive “containment” mechanisms through which military administrators put under erasure “downwinders”’ memories of toxic exposure and bodily attrition. Moreover, the case of the Kelly AFB is also significant because the toxic legacies of the facility became a poignant matter of public controversy and discord. Ultimately, I argue that commemorative rhetorics of bodily attrition *vis-à-vis* state-sanctioned toxicity are powerful symbolic repertoires of 21st-century US war culture, because they enable military institutions to remain unaccountable to its legacies of toxicity as well as afford “contaminated communities” valuable dissident resources to vie for a less caustic future.

In chapter four, I argue that a strategically crafted exercise in public forgetting serves as one of the US military’s most powerful weapons with which to impose borders against Latino/a migrants and the borderlands they inhabit. I explore two primary commemorative forms through which memories of Latino/a migrants circulate: (1) the institutional policies and forensic rhetorics through which migrant corpses are handled within the United States; and (2) the ephemera abandoned by undocumented migrants in the Southwest deserts. It is

particularly important to attend to these commemorative forms, because they serve as two of the most popular rhetorical loci through which histories of 21st-century US military violence and power against Latino/a migrant bodies are produced. Within the post-9/11 US zeitgeist, migrant corpses confront a system of US governmental policies that explicitly make the memory of dead migrants go missing. Poor records keeping practices, the destruction of bodily remains and DNA, as well as the burial of corpses in pauper's graves produces state-sanctioned lacunae over the histories of US military violence and power against Latino/a migrant bodies. Such lacunae are exacerbated by the rhetoric of environmental protection deployed by the US Border Patrol. More than just greenwashing a xenophobic, anti-immigration campaign, this insidious rhetorical strategy produces a memory of migrants posing a vaguely defined future threat, which ultimately rationalizes the past and present violence exacted against Latino/a migrant bodies. In spite of these amnestic rhetorics, I ultimately argue that these technological and material memory practices serve as necessary – but insufficient – avenues through which organizations and communities challenge the perpetuation of state-sanctioned suffering and death against migrant bodies within US-Mexico borderlands.

In the concluding chapter of this project, I return to the problem of public memory and forgetting, and consider some of the rhetorical mechanisms through which US military violence and power is exerted in the second decade of the 21st century. I conclude this project by championing rhetorical *praxis* and *theoria* as vital cultural resources through which the amnestic forces of 21st-century US war culture can be challenged and dismantled in the service of making life possible for war-torn bodies and landscapes that have little recourse than to die quietly and disappear from national consciousness.

Notes

¹ Trymain Lee, "A Father with a Coffin, Telling of War's Grim Toll," *New York Times*, February 1, 2007, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/01/nyregion/01father.html?_r=1&. Eugene Richards, "War is Personal: Carlos Arredondo/Age 45/Roslindale, Massachusetts," *The Nation*, May 8, 2006.

² Lee, "A Father with a Coffin."

³ "The Endless War Memorial: Father of Slain Soldier Joins Times Square Protest to Read Names of Iraq War Dead," transcript, *Democracynow.com*, March 13, 2007.

⁴ Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, trans Aaron Asher (New York: HarperCollins, 1978), 4.

⁵ See the "Appendix" for a more detailed timeline of America's war on terrorism.

⁶ For a high-level summary of some of the consequences of American military expenditures and policies on domestic and military life, see Kelly Denton-Borhaug, *U.S. War-Culture, Sacrifice and Salvation* (Oakville, CT: Equinox, 2011).

⁷ Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed., Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Book, 1968), 255-257.

⁸ James Fallows, "The Tragedy of the American Military," *The Atlantic*, February 2015.

⁹ See, Denton-Borhaug, *U.S. War-Culture*, 15; Catherine Lutz, "Making War at Home in the United States: Militarization and the Current Crisis," *American Anthropologist* 104 (2002): 723; Cynthia Enloe, *The Curious Feminist: Searching for Women in the New Age of Empire* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004), 245-247; Cynthia Enloe, *Globalization and Militarization: Feminists Make the Link* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007), 4-5.

¹⁰ Lauren Berlant, "The Subject of True Feeling: Pain, Privacy, and Politics," in *Cultural Studies and Political Theory*, ed., Jodi Dean (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000), 60; Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (New York: Verso, 2004), 35; Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* (New York: Verso, 2009), 25.

¹¹ Chris Cuomo, "War is Not an 'Event': Reflections on the Significance of Everyday Violence," *Hypatia* 11 (1996), 30; Richell M. Bernazzoli and Colin Flint, "Embodying the Garrison State?: Everyday Geographies of Militarization in American Society," *Political Geography* 29 (2010): 157-166.

¹² What "militarism" means varies a lot, and I want to keep that open in order to be more attentive to conditions of contemporary life that are obliquely and sometimes clandestinely frayed by proximities to military power. Therefore, I do not define "militarism" as a homogenous system. Instead, I define militarism in an analogous fashion to Foucault's definition of the "state". In one of his lectures, Foucault defined the state thusly: "The state is not a universal nor in itself an autonomous source of power. The state is nothing else but the effect, the profile, the mobile shape of a perpetual stratification or statifications, in the sense of incessant transactions which modify, or move, or drastically change In short, the state has no heart . . . in the sense that it has no interior. The state is nothing else but the mobile effect of a regime of multiple governmentalities." Militarism shares a similar definition, in this regard. Militarism cannot simply be defined in terms of a centralized institution or demagogue, an ideological system, a collection of weapons and cannon fodder, set of strategies and territories, or a set of legal or extralegal principles. Instead, militarism is an "assemblage of forces and drives, techniques and tactics, often organized as violence, performed in discrete sites and scenes" that produce political subjects. See Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the College de France, 1978-1979*, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Picador, 2004): 77; Patrick Anderson, *So Much Wasted: Hunger, Performance, and the Morbidity of Resistance* (London: Duke University Press, 2010), 10-11; Arthur Kleinman, Veena Das, and Margaret Lock, ed., *Social Suffering* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997).

¹³ Brian Massumi, "The Future Birth of the Affective Fact: The Political Ontology of Threat," in *The Affect Theory Reader*, ed., Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (London: Duke University Press, 2010), 53. See also, Brad Evans, "Terror in All Eventuality," *Theory & Event*, 13 (2010); n/a.

¹⁴ Massumi, "The Political Ontology of Threat," 53.

¹⁵ Robert L. Ivie, "Fighting Terror by Rite of Redemption and Reconciliation," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 10 (2007): 223; Kenneth Burke, *The Philosophy of Literary Form*, 3rd ed. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984), 39-40. See also, Robert Ivie, *Democracy and America's War on Terror* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press,

2005); Marouf Hasian, *In the Name of Necessity: Military Tribunals and the Loss of American Civil Liberties* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2005), 187-250; Carol Winkler, *In the Name of Terrorism: Presidents on Political Violence in the Post-World War II Era* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2006), 155-188; Stephen Hartnett and Laura Ann Stengrim, *Globalization and Empire: The U.S. Invasion of Iraq, Free Markets, and the Twilight of Democracy* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2009).

¹⁶ Lauren Berlant, "The Epistemology of State Emotion," in *Dissent in Dangerous Times*, ed., Austin Sarat (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 68-73; Susan Moeller, *Packaging Terrorism: Co-opting the News for Politics and Profit* (Oxford: Blackwell-Wiley, 2009).

¹⁷ Butler, *Frames of War*, 1-62.

¹⁸ Ernest Renan, "What is a Nation?," in *The Collective Memory Reader*, ed., Jeffrey Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Daniel Levy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 80-84; John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 13; Edward Tabor Linenthal, *Sacred Ground: Americans and Their Battlefields* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1991).

¹⁹ James Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 2.

²⁰ Young, *The Texture of Memory*, 2.

²¹ George Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 1990), 7.

²² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised ed. (London: Verso, 2006), 4-7.

²³ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 4-7.

²⁴ Dickinson et al., *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2010), 16. See also, Charles E. Morris III, ed., "Special Issue: The AIDS Quilt at 20: Commemoration and Critique of the Epidemic Text," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 10 (2007): 557-721; Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), 183-219; W. James Booth, *Communities of Memory: On Witness, Identity, and Justice* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 39-71.

²⁵ Bradford Vivian, "Neoliberal Epideictic: Rhetorical Form and Commemorative Politics on September 11, 2002," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 92 (2006): 3-4; Marita Sturken, *Tourists of History: Memory, Kitsch, and Consumerism From Oklahoma City to Ground Zero* (London: Duke University Press, 2007), 6-30; Michael Butterworth, *Baseball and Rhetorics of Purity: The National Pastime and American identity During the War on Terror* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2010), 60.

²⁶ James P. McDaniel, "More than Meets the Eye: An Expose on Patriotic Libido and Judgment at the Level of Image in America," in *Judgment Calls: Rhetoric, Politics, and Indeterminacy*, ed., John M. Sloop and James P. McDaniel (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), 152.

²⁷ Michael Calvin McGee, "In Search of 'The People': A Rhetorical Alternative," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 61 (1975): 235-249.

²⁸ Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories*, 1-10.

²⁹ Kendall Phillips, ed., *Frames of Public Memory* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2004), 1-16.

³⁰ Throughout this project, I invoke the term "amnesic rhetoric" to designate state-sanctioned memory practices that function to sanitize, distort, and sometimes blatantly conceal histories of US military violence that reflect unfavorably on American national identity and its military institutions. This term, however, requires further explanation. Because no one memory can provide an Archimedean viewpoint of a particular historical pastime or event, then all memory practices are, in part, an exercise in forgetting. This critical tenet of all public memory scholarship (i.e., that interpretations of the past are defined by a dialectic of memory and forgetting) conceptualizes all memory texts, cultural recollections, and commemorative forms as inescapably *selective*. Moreover, public memories concerning volatile cultural histories are frequently animated by ideological forces bent on producing particular kinds of political consequences in the world. "Amnesic rhetorics," then, refer to those statist, politically-charged memory practices that contain and regulate the extent to which populations can remember the histories of US military violence and power within a dissident register. Moreover, by using the term

“amnesic rhetoric” (rather than “amnesic institutions” or “amnesic populations”), my intent is to highlight that state-sanctioned memory practices of America’s contemporary military campaigns can circulate throughout a variety of communities, institutions, and nodes of culture. The proxies and channels of “amnesic rhetorics” may be diffuse but their objective is the same: romanticize the past, make it clean, and deflect public attention away from troubling military histories so as to “maintain morale,” “win over the hearts and minds of the people,” and deter dissident attitudes.

³¹ On pages 19-23, I provide a more explicit justification concerning the populations that I examine in this project. Likewise, I also explain the limits of these case studies and acknowledge that I only examine three specific war-torn populations, even though many, many more war-torn populations exist. I mention this here so as to emphasize that there are a range of war-torn populations that are – in different but systematic ways – vulnerable to the machinations of US military violence and power. Throughout this chapter, I will at least acknowledge some of the populations that do not serve as the focus of my chapters in hopes of inspiring readers toward future studies and projects.

³² Susie Linfield, *The Cruel Radiance: Photography and Political Violence* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 170. See also, Elaine Scarry, *Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 60-161.

³³ Thomas M. Hawley, *The Remains of War: Bodies, Politics, and the Search for American Soldiers Unaccounted For in Southeast Asia* (London: Duke University Press, 2005), 26; Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories*, 10. See also, Paul Connorton, *How Societies Remember* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 6-40; Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage Publications, 1995), 38; Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (Columbia, NY: Columbia University Press, 1996; Paul Connerton, *How Modernity Forgets* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Emily Grabham, “‘Flagging’ the Skin: Corporeal Nationalism and the Properties of Belonging,” *Body and Society* 15 (2009): 63-82.

³⁴ Dickinson et al., *Places of Public Memory*, 1-56.

³⁵ For example, see Peter Ehrenhaus, “The Vietnam Veterans Memory: An Invitation to Argument,” *Argumentation and Advocacy* 25 (1988): 54-64; Carole Blair, Marsha Jeppeson, and Enricho Pucci, “Public Memorializing in Postmodernity: The Vietnam Veteran’s Memorial as Prototype,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 77 (1991): 263-91; Stephen Browne, “Reading Public Memory in Daniel Webster’s Plymouth Rock Oration,” *Western Journal of Communication* 57 (1993): 464-77; Edward Linenthal and David Chidester, *American Sacred Space* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995); Edward Linenthal, “Anatomy of a Controversy,” in *History Wars: The Enola Gay and Other Battles for the American Past*, ed., Edward Linenthal and Tom Englehardt (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1996), 9-62; Sturken, *Tangled Memories*, 44-85; Bryan Hubbard and Marouf Hasian Jr., “Atomic Memories of the Enola Gay: Strategies of Remembrance at the National Air and Space Museum,” *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 3 (1998): 363-85; Katherine Verdery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Postsocialist Change* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); Barbara Biesecker, “Remembering World War II: The Rhetoric and Politics of National Commemoration at the Turn of the 21st Century,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 88 (2002): 393-4; Kenneth Foote, *Shadowed Ground: America’s Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy*, revised ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003); David Hoogland Noon, “Operation Enduring Analogy: World War II, The War on Terror, and the Uses of History Memory,” *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 7 (2004): 329-66; David Simpson, *9/11: The Culture of Commemoration* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006); Jay Winter, *Remembering War: The Great War Between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 136; Carole Blair and Neil Michel, “The AIDS Memorial Quilt and the Contemporary Culture of Public Commemoration,” *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 10 (2007): 595-626; Jordynn Jack, “Space, Time, Memory: Gendered Recollections of Wartime Los Alamos,” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 37 (2007): 229-50; Bradford Vivian, *Public Forgetting: The Rhetoric and Politics of Beginnings Again* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 63-88, 133-67; Bryan C. Taylor, “Radioactive History: Rhetoric, Memory, and Place in the Post-Cold War Nuclear Museum,” in *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials*, ed., Greg Dickinson, Carole Blair, and Brian L. Ott (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2010), 57-86; Marouf Hasian Jr., “Critical Museology, (Post)Colonial Communication, and the Gradual Mastering of Traumatic Pasts at the Royal Museum for Central Africa (RMCA),” *Western Journal of Communication* 74 (2010): 128-49; V. William Balthrop, Carole Blair, and Michel Neil, “The Presence of the Past: Hijacking ‘The Good War’?,” *Western Journal of Communication* 74

(2010): 195; Edward Linenthal, "The Instability of Sacred Space: Sacralization and Desecration," *Material Religion: The Journal of Objects, Art, and Belief* 7 (2011): 278-281; Michael Butterworth, "Militarism and Memorializing at the Pro Football Hall of Fame," *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 9 (2012): 241-258.

³⁶ Dickinson et al., *Places of Public Memory*, 2.

³⁷ Connorton, *How Societies Remember*, 6-40; Diana Taylor, *Disappearing Acts: Spectacles of Gender and nationalism in Argentina's "Dirty War"* (London: Duke University Press, 1997), 92-93.

³⁸ Although a probing account of "affect theory" exceeds the scope of this dissertation, it is worth mentioning that the War on Terror – and the public memories it implicates – is an *affectively energized political formation*. Histories of military violence do not only circulate through the ideological inscription of war-torn bodies and landscapes. Such histories are also affectively known and experienced, reverberating as opaque impressions and fluctuating intensities through the ordinary rituals and movements of everyday life. Given that the exercise of military power aims primarily to kill and let die, then feelings of grief-stricken loss, terror, and anger are common affects that animate public memories of military violence. For example, families of dead US soldiers, residents who live adjacent to toxic military bases, and migrants getting by within militarized borderlands all know histories of military violence through the loss and pain that such junctures produce. Populations' grief-stricken memories of loved ones who could not survive junctures of military power call forth the histories of state-sanctioned violence, often prompting additive affects such as fear for one's own personal safety, anger at deranged institutions, and even the exhaustion of slow death and perpetual suffering. The point to emphasize here is that national histories of military violence and the sociopolitical relationships between civilians and military institutions that sustain them are felt as much as they are represented, and that these feelings charge the possibilities of survival and dissent. Following Deborah Gould, I define affect as those "bodily, sensory, inarticulate, [and] nonconscious" experiences that "we do not quite have language for, something that we cannot fully grasp, something that escapes us but is nevertheless in play, generated through interaction with the world, and affecting our embodied beings and subsequent actions." Deborah Gould, *Moving Politics: Emotion and Act Up's Fight against AIDS* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 20. In contrast, an emotion is, in Brian Massumi's idiom, a "qualified intensity, the conventional, consensual point of insertion of intensity into semantically and semiotically formed professions . . . it is intensity owned and recognized." Brian Massumi, *Parables of the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 28. See also, Sarah Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004) 4-10.

³⁹ Sheldon Wolin, "Fugitive Democracy" in *Democracy and Difference*, ed., Seyla Benhabib (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 31-45. My method is animated in large measure by the critical approaches to rhetorical criticism promoted by the following: Michael Calvin McGee, "In Search of 'the People: A Rhetorical Alternative,'" *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 1 (1975): 235-249; Michael Calvin McGee, "The 'Ideograph': A Link Between Rhetoric and Ideology," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 66 (1980): 1-16; Philip Wander, "The Third Persona: An Ideological Turn in Rhetorical Theory," *Central States Speech Journal* 35 (1984): 207-215; Maurice Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the *Peuple Quebecois*," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73 (1987): 133-150; Michael Calvin McGee, "Text, Context, and the Fragmentation of Contemporary Culture," *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 54 (1990): 274-289; Raymie McKerrow, "Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Praxis," *Communication Monographs* 56 (1989): 102; Robert L. Ivie, "Productive Criticism Then and Now," *American Journal of Communication* 4 (2001), 1; Robert L. Ivie, "Finessing the Demonology of War: Toward a Practical Aesthetic of Humanizing Dissent," *Javnost – The Public* 14 (2007): 37-54.

⁴⁰ Barbara Biesecker, "Of Historicity, Rhetoric: The Archive as Scene of Invention," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 9 (2006): 124-131. Writes Biesecker: "From the *historicity* of the archive, rhetorics; out of the deconstruction of the material presence of the past and, thus, in relation to what the archive cannot *authenticate* absolutely but can (be made to) *authorize* nonetheless, issues an invitation to write rhetorical histories of archives, which is to say, critical histories of the situated and strategic uses to which archives have been put" (130).

⁴¹ Lauren Berlant, *The Queen of American Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship* (London: Duke University Press, 1997); Lauren Berlant, *The Female Complaint: The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture* (London: Duke University Press, 2008).

⁴² Erika Doss, *The Emotional Life of Contemporary Public Memorials: Towards a Theory of Temporary Memorials* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008).

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- ⁴³ Diane Taylor, *The Archive and Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (London: Duke University Press, 2003). See also, Charles E. Morris III "The Archival Turn in Rhetorical Studies; Or, the Archive's Rhetorical (Re)Turn," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 9 (2006): 113-115; Cara Finnegan, "What is This a Picture of?: Some Thoughts on Images and Archives," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 9 (2006): 116-123; Charles E. Morris III, "Archival Queer," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 9 (2006): 145-151; Charles E. Morris III, "Richard Halliburton's Bearded Tales," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 95 (2009): 123-147.
- ⁴⁴ Berlant, *The Queen of America*, 12.
- ⁴⁵ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans., Steve Rendall (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984), 91-111.
- ⁴⁶ Josè Esteban Muñoz, "Ephemera as Evidence: Instructory Notes to Queer Acts," *Women and Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 8 (1996), 5-16.
- ⁴⁷ Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed., C. Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Basingstroke, MacMillan Education, 1988), 271-313.
- ⁴⁸ For more information, see Enloe, *The Curious Feminist*, 245-247; Enloe *Globalization and Militarization*; Lutz, "Making War at Home."
- ⁴⁹ Although scholarship is just beginning to emerge on this topic, I encourage readers to explore the following article for more information: Valerie Wieskamp, "Nurses of Bataan: Liberating Wartime Heroes from Melodrama," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 16 (2013), 29-58.

Chapter 2

“Entrenched Rhetorical Norms, Dissident Memory, and the *Necropoleis* of 21st-Century American War Culture”

On the eve of the 13th anniversary of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and poised by a podium where he announced the gradual withdrawal of troops from Iraq and Afghanistan two years earlier, President Barack Obama declared that the US military will wage yet another war as part of America’s recurrent “global war against terrorism.” In an effort to mobilize a war-weary American public that had become troubled by – and, in some cases, bored with – the spectacular horrors of US military intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan, the President assured Americans that this military campaign “will be different . . . [because] it will not involve American combat troops fighting on foreign soil.⁵⁰ Judging from the national support that followed from the President’s speech,⁵¹ it would seem as though the President’s pledge to bypass another distressing war by keeping “boots off the ground” was a rhetorical accomplishment.⁵² But more than simply a persuasive appeal, the pledge also reveals a vital condition of contemporary US war culture – namely, that the legacies and urgencies of 21st-century US military violence are haunted and unsettled by the lingering public memories of dead and dying US soldiers, that even in the second decade of America’s longest war, many Americans invariably look back on the contemporary histories of US warfare through the prism of US military casualties. Despite the legion of contemporary American memorial practices that commemorate dead soldiers as “Fallen Heroes” who died dutifully in the service of a military campaign, the circumstances of soldiers’ deaths can also provoke dissident memories of US military violence. Examples of such dissident memories often involve the 6,800 US soldiers who “returned home” in caskets, or the 1000 veterans who died waiting for Veterans Affairs to

process hundreds of thousands of backlogged disability claims, or even the tens of thousands of psychologically and sexually traumatized veterans, many of whom have committed suicide since 2001.⁵³ Even if veterans who died as a result of suicide or medical malpractice do not conventionally register as “casualties of war,” they are a war-torn population nonetheless, and their memory serves as a cold reminder that “the global war against terrorism” has never simply been a “successful mission.” Ultimately, then, the President’s most recent declaration of war achieved persuasive resonance, because it attempted to sidestep a disturbing irony animating 21-century US war culture. Specifically, of those Americans who give their lives in the service of a national-military operation, some become in death the very reason to call it into question.

Dead soldiers return to the world of the living in transmuted form, as (1) symbolically consecrated matter and (2) politicized emblems of national identity. First, although the viscera of dead soldiers may be entombed at cemeteries (or eviscerated by modern weaponry), the memories of US military casualties continually resurface in the form of metonymy, defined here as the metaphoric substitution or “reduction” of one thing in terms of something else to which it is loosely related.⁵⁴ If, as Kenneth Burke reminds us, metonyms “convey some incorporeal or intangible state in terms of the corporeal or tangible,” then the metonyms of dead US soldiers (e.g., flag-draped caskets, gravestones, folded flags, Purple Hearts, “body counts” and statistical data, bumper stickers, wrist bands) operate as rhetorical and material surrogates that rematerialize a life that has been consigned inescapably to the vicissitudes of American public memory.⁵⁵

Second, the spectral surrogates of dead US soldiers – and the cultural values attributed to them – are not ideologically neutral or “timeless” permutations of “the American Spirit.” Instead, metonyms of dead US soldiers are always entrenched within historical conditions of power and politics and their rhetorical force is conventionally exercised in the service of American nationalism. If, as Paul Achter persuasively shows, metonyms of soldiers’ bodies are highly politicized cultural mediums inasmuch as they “create the possibility for audiences to cultivate an emotional attachment to the nation-state,” then soldiers’ bodies are “deployed” not only in the service of military conflict but also in “mobilizing” public opinion and sentiment in support of the State and its ongoing military campaigns.⁵⁶ Indeed, the regularity with which US military institutions enlist metonyms of “The Fallen” in order to habituate Americans’ consent to war suggests that the “posthumous political lives” of dead soldiers routinely operate as powerful disciplinary mechanisms for foreclosing political dissent in American public culture.⁵⁷ In his genealogical critique of the modern slogan “Support-the-Troops,” Roger Stahl argues that popular metonyms of US soldiers from 20th- and 21st-century American culture (e.g., yellow ribbons, the POW/MIA flag) “deflect” deliberation and debate from the logics that enable war to thrive as well as “dissociate” citizens from soldiers by recasting civic dissent as a threat to US servicewomen and servicemen.⁵⁸ However, metonyms of dead US soldiers can also undergo an ironic transformation insofar as they can disturb Americans’ compliance to particular military campaigns and institutions, as evidenced by the aforementioned VA scandal and alarming rates of suicide and trauma amongst the ranks. The changing historical conditions in which the war-torn bodies of US soldiers undergo metonymic transmutation and acquire cultural intelligibility are vital sites for rhetorical intervention and critique for two general

reasons. First, metonyms symptomize shifting cultural attitudes about US military violence and power. Second, they also serve as powerful discursive forces for reconfiguring the boundaries between public memory and political dissent upon which conceptions of “the American way of life” cohere.

The shift from living to dead soldiers – wherein the propagandistic slogan “Support the Troops” finds an analogous afterlife in the metonymic command to “Honor the Fallen” – calls attention to a different set of historical spaces that circulate metonyms of soldiers’ bodies. Metonyms of dead soldiers are nowhere more palpable and ubiquitous than state-sanctioned military cemeteries. US military institutions since America’s inception have deployed “the Fallen” in order to delimit the field of acceptable commemorative performances and the definitions of national identity that such acts of remembrance promote.⁵⁹ This essay takes seriously Henri Lefebvre’s assertion that space “embodies social relationships” as well as Mary Douglas’ observation that bodily “rituals enact . . . social relations.”⁶⁰ Given these assumptions, I argue that “official” military cemeteries such as section 60 of the *Arlington National Cemetery* and “vernacular” war memorials such as the *Arlington West Memorial* recite and revise historically entrenched metonyms for commemorating dead US soldiers in order to mediate the interstices between rituals of mourning 21st-century US military casualties, national commemorations of the War on Terror, and sociopolitical affiliations between citizens and military authorities.⁶¹ As Carole Blair and others remind us, the composition and design of public memorials are vital sites of cultural reproduction, because such practices forge public memories of the nation’s past as well as public conceptions of collective identity and political responsibility.⁶² Barbara Biesecker argues that popular “memory texts” such as the *Women in*

Military Service for American Memorial promote habits of remembrance that encourage citizens to ignore rather than actively challenge “the inequitable power relations that continue to structure collective life in the United States.”⁶³ Similarly, William Balthrop and Carole Blair argue that the 2004 opening ceremony at the *World War II Memorial* celebrated “George W. Bush’s ‘America’ under the sanctifying emblem of World War II” in order to define the citizenry as an inert mass governed by a presumably benevolent sovereign authority.⁶⁴ Elsewhere, Biesecker argues that such post-9/11 American patriotic discourse operates as a “carefully crafted and meticulously managed melancholic rhetoric” that commemorates national trauma by demanding its citizens to cede power “to the remilitarized state for the sake of protecting what *will have been* lost: namely, the democratic way of life.”⁶⁵ What these authors convincingly demonstrate is that it is imperative for scholars working within rhetorical, memory, and critical/cultural studies to investigate the historically-circumscribed metonyms of dead soldiers within military memorials, because it is precisely these metonyms that simultaneously energize and debilitate political agency and collective world-making.⁶⁶

In order to expand these critiques, I situate two contemporary “memory-places” of 21st-century US military casualties – i.e., section 60 at the *Arlington National Cemetery* and the *Arlington West Memorial* – within a broader national context of commemorating ordinary US military casualties *vis-à-vis* histories of US military violence and power. Rather than juxtapose the contrasting compositional features between a state-sanctioned military cemetery with a populist memorial, I argue that each of these spaces recite and revise the historically-entrenched rhetorical norms for commemorating dead US soldiers within American political culture. As such, they function to affirm, renegotiate, and in some cases dismantle, the

“derealizing aims of [21st-century US] military violence” and the sociopolitical relationships between citizens, soldiers, and military institutions that sustain it.⁶⁷ First, I analyze domestic and foreign US military cemeteries (and one memorial) built between the 18th and 20th centuries, arguing that historical changes in the designs of such spaces illustrate the dominant and residual commemorative habits and styles animating contemporary spaces for remembering 21st-century US military casualties.⁶⁸ Second, I argue that the design of section 60 at the *Arlington National Cemetery* primarily recites modern commemorative styles of “heroic self-sacrifice” in ways that de-individuate legacies of personal loss and de-historicize the exigencies of the War on Terror. If section 60 exhibits a reduction of dead US soldiers to amnestic metonyms of “national martyrdom,” then the *Arlington West Memorial* ironically deploys such metonyms in an effort to expand the possibilities of enacting dissident rituals of mourning and commemorating 21st-century US military casualties.⁶⁹ Finally, I examine the ironic arrangement of the *Arlington West Memorial*. I argue that it reiterates the military’s modern commemorative traditions, as well as reconfigures such traditions so as to promote dissident memories that publicize the impasses of protracted grief and amplify the domestic and international urgencies orchestrated by a deranged US military apparatus. Ultimately, by historicizing the competing rhetorical norms of entombment, consecration, and memorialization at section 60 of the *Arlington National Cemetery* and the *Arlington West Memorial*, I argue that contemporary *necropoleis* of dead US soldiers exhibit dominant, residual, and emergent metonyms of US soldiers that powerfully circumscribe the commemorative “habits of interaction” through which contemporary audiences act on personal and national loss.⁷⁰ In the conclusion, I claim that irony is a master trope of democratic public

culture that expands the available range of commemorative habits and styles while refusing to reduce US military casualties to a symbolic affirmation of war.

US Military Cemeteries and the Public Remembrance of Ordinary US Soldiers: A Modest Rhetorical History

A definitive mark of 20th- and 21st-century American war culture is the myth that soldiers who die in state-sanctioned military campaigns have *always* received national rituals of consecration, that the remains and memories of dead soldiers have always been nationally-anointed matters. However, the contemporary rhetorical norms involved in entombing, consecrating, and memorializing “the Fallen” derive from modern rhetorical practices. During the American Revolution and the War of 1812, Congress rarely invested resources in burying or memorializing common soldiers, opting instead to allocate national recognition almost exclusively to political and military elites such as George Washington or Andrew Jackson with opulent funerals and the occasional monument.⁷¹ The stories about these Generals – especially their victorious military battles against British monarchical oppression in the name of liberal values and democratic government – served as a compelling commemorative trope through which to imagine America and its relationships to “the People”. In contrast to the lavish funerals of military elites, the bodily remains of ordinary soldiers were frequently abandoned to private plots or small churchyards, given that the military had not yet adopted formal repatriation or interment policies and that many families could not afford to retrieve the corpse of a loved one.⁷² To put it bluntly, the entombment and public memories of ordinary soldiers during the first century of American warfare were unremarkable and easily forgotten.

The War Department’s nepotistic amnesia, however, would dissipate by the end of the Civil War, as the enormous and unprecedented accumulation of Union and Confederate

casualties – approximately 600,000 combined – compelled a mélange of civilians, organizations, private industries, and state agencies to improvise alternative programs for managing and memorializing the dead. Consider, for example, some of the diffuse cultural practices that emerged amidst the carnage of the Civil War: organizations such as the Christian Commission and the South Carolina Relief Depot helped the bereaved locate and then rebury a loved one from a battlefield to a local cemetery; wealthy families financed private investigators to ascertain the death and whereabouts of their dead relatives; undertakers, embalmers, and private surgeons built profitable businesses that promised to reconstruct and then transport the recently deceased; and local newspapers began publicizing names of casualties at nearby battlefields.⁷³ Unlike the state’s disregard for handling the corpses of ordinary soldiers during the Revolutionary War, the magnitude of death brought-on by the Civil War incited American businesses, organizations, and families to invent haphazard systems for documenting, identifying, reassembling, and relocating ordinary soldiers.

State institutions nevertheless counterbalanced such variegated local practices with a systematized program for managing military casualties. Troubled by stories that antagonistic southerners routinely desecrated Union graves as well as the differential treatment of Union soldiers from wealthy families, Congress granted the War Department the power to recover and repatriate all Union casualties, as well as to administer a national cemetery system in 1867.⁷⁴ The War Department eventually interred roughly 300,000 Union soldiers at over 74 newly-constructed and idyllic “national cemeteries.” Each offered easy access to large populations of Americans, incorporated white marble grave markers with the name and rank of the deceased etched on the surface, and raised an American flag around which the graves could

be arranged.⁷⁵ These novel funerary spaces make evident that the War Department began to strategically deploy the physical and symbolic bodies of dead soldiers as materials of national significance. Importantly, not all soldiers received equal treatment at these military cemeteries, because the War Department excluded Confederate burials as well as segregated the corpses of black Union soldiers in separate plots of the cemetery.⁷⁶ The deliberate exclusion of particular US soldiers at national cemeteries suggests that the War Department built these cemeteries, in part, to imagine the nation in terms of Union victory and racial segregation. Henceforth, national institutions and military elites would purposefully disseminate the public memories of ordinary US soldiers according to strategic repatriation policies, decadent funerary rituals, and classical commemorative aesthetics in order to consolidate public sentiment and mold American national identity in the service of US military violence and power.⁷⁷

By WWI, Congress implemented more reliable identification, repatriation, and interment procedures to handle the roughly 115,000 dead US soldiers, prompting a surge of both domestic and overseas military cemeteries administered by the War Department and the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) respectively.⁷⁸ Whereas national cemeteries for Civil War casualties explicitly excluded Confederate burials and segregated black soldiers from white soldiers, WWI cemeteries homogenized the symbolic representations of all WWI US military casualties in order to promote a “vision of uniform nationalism.”⁷⁹ Notably, the War Department and the ABMC used the Arlington National Cemetery as both a prototype and template for this emergent spatial arrangement, which consisted of three standardized metonyms. First, after the War Department began etching Judeo-Christian insignias directly

onto grave markers (e.g., Arlington National Cemetery), the ABMC followed suit by sculpting the marble headstones at overseas cemeteries in the shape of Roman crosses or Stars of David (e.g., Normandy American Cemetery).⁸⁰ By inscribing the grave markers of all dead WWI soldiers with such religious iconography, the War Department and the ABMC framed the US military's involvement in WWI as "a sacred event . . . [that] provided the nation with a new depth of religious feeling, putting at its disposal ever-present saints and martyrs, places of worship, and a heritage to emulate."⁸¹ Moreover, the ABMC originally planned on designing the grave markers only as Roman crosses in order to sanctify US casualties as an extraordinary congregation of American (Christian) heroes who sacrificed their lives in the service of a "higher order of moral superiority and nationalism."⁸² A second metonym specific to WWI cemeteries involved the Tomb of the Unknown. Congress first installed the Tomb of the Unknown at the Arlington National Cemetery in 1921 to commemorate an anonymous WWI soldier as the quintessence of national honor and sacrifice. Whereas Judeo-Christian insignia elided the particularities of the dead under a banner of national martyrdom, the Tomb of the Unknown homogenized the dead through its anonymity. Even as the Tomb of the Unknown serves as a memorial through which particular friends and families commemorate loved ones, it is not so much a grave for a particular soldier.⁸³ Instead, it is an entymematic stand-in for all soldiers who sacrificed their lives in the service of the nation, especially those whose remains were never recovered.⁸⁴ Third, although many ordinary Civil War soldiers received individual graves and tombstones, only in WWI did the War Department and the ABMC entomb all US soldiers in individually marked graves or etch their names on "Tablets of the Missing." Even as this "commemorative hyper-nominalism" individuated the dead by inscribing each name in stone,

the virtually homogeneous design of the cemeteries (e.g., the classically styled architecture, the standardization of the epitaphs, the spatial arrangement of the graves) nonetheless assimilated all dead US soldiers into a mass of indistinct “Fallen Heroes.”⁸⁵ What the proliferation of these metonyms at military cemeteries reveals is that each and every dead US soldier could be deployed in the service of a posthumous rhetorical mission, one that reimagines a soldier’s death – and the 20th-century military campaigns in which they died – as a nationally sacrosanct achievement and a morally-righteous condition of the “American way of life.” Moreover, commemorating WWI US casualties as nationally-sacred events implicitly frames dissent against such military histories as a sacrilegious and even treasonous political activity. (The Aisne-Marne American Military cemetery [figure 1] is an apt illustration of these emergent institutional norms.)



Figure 1: Aisne-Marne American Cemetery.
Photo Credit: Brian Cohen/personal photograph (2013)
Permissions provided by the photographer (see the Appendix)

These three metonyms saturate US military cemeteries well into the 21st century. Moreover, they would remain an important bulwark in the production of a modern American identity predicated on the sanctity of dead soldiers and the presumed moral certitude of US military violence and power. For example, both domestic and overseas WWII military cemeteries largely reiterated the classical style of WWI military cemeteries. They nominalized the dead with individual grave markers or “The Wall of the Missing,” entombed an anonymous WWII corpse in the Tomb of the Unknown, and carved white marble grave markers according to Judeo-Christian symbolism.⁸⁶ In stamping each dead US soldier – 177,000 of which are located in overseas cemeteries alone – with virtually indistinguishable metonymic codes of monumental sacrifice, these military cemeteries calcify a national fantasy, one that envisions 20th-century US military violence as though it was unequivocally “won” by American heroes who vanquished tyrannical regimes and ushered forth a new era of liberal-democratic freedoms.⁸⁷ Moreover, despite the strikingly complicated, variegated, and troubling military campaigns launched by the US military in the latter-half of the 20th century (e.g., Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf), these three metonymic codes continue to serve as the dominant commemorative styles. Consequently, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the ABMC not only memorialize dead US soldiers within domestic and overseas cemeteries but also restrict dissident memories and reimagine American national identity according to a sanitized and sacred vision of US military violence and power.⁸⁸

America’s early-modern commemorative traditions of military triumphalism began to waver, however, in the fallout of the Vietnam War. Due in part to the widely publicized belligerence of the US military, the controversial deaths of 60,000 US soldiers and over

1,000,000 North and South Vietnamese, as well as the failure of the US government to confirm the deaths of “MIAs” and repatriate the remains of all “KIAs,” the enduring memories of the Vietnam War upended the early modern military traditions. These public memories are “restive” ones that “disrupted the expectation that dead soldiers can be retired to a stoic, martyred memory of heroism and sacrifice.”⁸⁹ Many veterans no longer trusted US governmental leaders to competently handle the corpses and public memories of US soldiers who died in Vietnam. In 1979, Jan Scruggs and other veterans formed the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund to devise an alternative space for mourning and commemorating US casualties of the Vietnam War. Designed by Maya Lin and completed in 1982, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is not a military cemetery proper. Still, the design of “the Wall” – as well as the commemorative habits it promotes – demonstrates the cultural corrosion between the memorialization of dead US soldiers and the fantasies of US military history upon which military institutions restrict political dissent and legitimize their power. For example, the Wall reiterates the “hyper-nominalism” introduced during WWI but then imprints the soldiers’ individual names in an “emphatically unheroic” style.⁹⁰ Rather than etching the names on a classically-styled, white marble monument, Lin designed the memorial to display soldiers’ names on a black granite wall that is burrowed and carved into the ground. Additionally, by presenting soldiers’ names without military designation and Judeo-Christian iconography, the Wall impedes the compulsion to remember the dead exclusively as military martyrs who fought noble wars in the name of righteous national principles.⁹¹ As many scholars have noted⁹², the Wall’s breach of the US military’s modern commemorative tradition produced vitriolic public reactions, rousing some audiences to characterize the Wall as an anti-patriotic monument and

a “black gash of shame and sorrow.”⁹³ The Wall’s unheroic tone even triggered the nearby installment of reactionary memorials that recited WWII commemorative aesthetics (e.g., Frederick’s Hart realist sculpture, *The Three Soldiers*).⁹⁴ Another feature of the Wall that deviates from modern military traditions involves the habitual on-site placement of ephemera. Yielding mementos and other objects at the Wall has become a regular commemorative ritual. As of 2012, the National Park Service has collected and archived over 400,000 objects left behind at the Wall. Although the reasons for bestowing these objects at the Wall are perhaps as heterogeneous as the objects themselves (e.g., dog tags, sonogram images, diary entries, beer bottles, a motorcycle), what the preponderance of such ephemera indicates is that the Wall allowed audiences to interact with memories of dead soldiers and histories of US military violence beyond the commemorative traditions from WWI and WWII. Specifically, in harnessing and subverting the modernist *topoi* for commemorating dead US soldiers, the Wall magnetized the cultural volatility, lack of closure, and political dissent involved in trying to comprehend the national and personal loss caused by the Vietnam War. Indeed, the dissensus surrounding the “Vietnam Unknown” – who was initially entombed at Arlington in 1984 but then, after public outcry, exhumed in order to ascertain the proper identity and history of the corpse – allegorizes the ways that Vietnam veterans’ bodies continue to haunt American national identity and disturb triumphalist renditions of US military violence and power.⁹⁵

If there is a lesson to this modest rhetorical history, it is this: the national adoration attributed to dead soldiers – and the habits and styles of entombment, consecration, and memorialization through which such adoration is expressed and conditioned – is not so much a natural phenomenon as it is a rhetorical invention crafted by an array of communities and

institutions. These rhetorical inventions produce definitions of US (military) history and identity, reconfigure the boundaries between national memory and political dissent, and realign the affiliations between citizen, soldiers, and military institutions. The historically-situated codifications of dead soldiers at military cemeteries between the 18th and 20th centuries mark the dominant, residual, and emergent commemorative traditions involving the *necropoleis* of US soldiers. More importantly, these metonyms at US military cemeteries also demonstrate that US military casualties are rhetorically revived in order to interpellate Americans into carefully crafted national identities predicated on romanticized – but in some cases dissident – historical accounts of American warfare. As I will demonstrate in the following analyses of section 60 of the *Arlington National Cemetery* and the *Arlington West Memorial*, official military institutions and vernacular communities recite and revise these dominant and residual rhetorical norms in order to renegotiate and in some cases dismantle the co-constitutive dynamics between the memories of dead soldiers, the historical urgencies of 21st-century US military violence, and the possibilities of dissent through which sociopolitical affiliation between citizens, soldiers, and military institutions cohere.

Consigning the Dead to an Abstracted Historical Pastime: Section 60 and the Pantheon of National Martyrs

The Arlington National Cemetery (“Arlington”) is unequivocally one of the most sacred national landscape within the American political imaginary. Since the US government designated the site as a military cemetery on June 15th, 1864, it has become the second largest military cemetery in the US, containing 320,000 graves and tens of thousands of inurnments that date as far back as the Civil War. To be buried at the “hallowed grounds” of America’s “most sacred shrine” remains a highly coveted national honor, and the Department of Army

conducts an average of 6,900 on-site burials each year (approximately 28 each day).⁹⁶ The national sanctity attributed to the cemetery is further evidenced by its 4,000,000 annual visitors, many of whom walk amidst rows of pristine white gravestones in search of the burial places of presidents, Supreme Court Justices, and astronauts, as well as a variety of early-modern memorials, including the Robert E. Lee Memorial and the Arlington Amphitheatre. In contrast to these popular tourist destinations, one plot of land on the southeastern side of Arlington involves more somber and personal commemorative performances. At section 60 – which some visitors regard as the “saddest acre in America” – reside the graves of over 800 soldiers who died serving tours in Iraq and Afghanistan during America’s War on Terror.⁹⁷ As a result, many of the people who regularly visit section 60 are grieving, and their movements often consist of somberly running their fingers across the etchings of a grave marker. If Arlington is an iconic and prototypical national landscape that invokes the dead in order to assist visitors’ comprehension of national loss *vis-à-vis* histories of military violence, then section 60 crystallizes these relationships within the context of the War on Terror.



Figure 2: Section 60 of the Arlington National Cemetery.
 Photo Credit: Brian Cohen/Personal Photograph (2013)
 Permissions provided by the photographer (see the Appendix)

Given that Arlington is supervised and organized exclusively under the authority and control of the Department of the Army, it is perhaps not surprising that the design of section 60 reiterates the dominant rhetorical norms for entombing, consecrating, and memorializing dead soldiers that first formed during modern American warfare. Specifically, cemetery personnel hyper-nominalize dead soldiers by dedicating each corpse to individually marked graves or urns while homogenizing the design of such metonyms according to a seemingly timeless code of national martyrdom. In order to be “laid to rest” at section 60, each soldier’s body undergoes elaborate burial rituals that transform the corpse into a specific arrangement of metonyms, e.g., a flag-draped casket or urn, a gravestone or plaque, a folded American flag. The idiom of “heroic self-sacrifice” is intricately bound to these metonyms: funerary processions eulogize the

heroic deeds of the deceased, on-site plaques and memorials celebrate the “Honored Glory” of military service (e.g., the Tomb of the Unknown), and most gravestones display Christian crosses and military honors for bravery and courage. In other words, the memories of dead soldiers undergo a powerful rhetorical transformation once they materialize as slabs of white marble inscribed only with the deceased’s name, religious affiliation, and military rank, branch, and honors. To codify the dead according to these traditional norms of entombment, consecration, and memorialization is to enshrine 21st-century military casualties within an imagined pantheon of undifferentiated national heroes from all modern US military campaigns. Interestingly, the grave markers at section 60 deviate from their modern predecessors only insofar as they include an inscription of the slogan-like names of contemporary military campaigns (e.g., “Operation Enduring Freedom”). Notwithstanding these unconventional historical designations, military administrators explicitly prohibit visitors from adorning loved ones’ graves and cemetery personnel regularly trash personal mementos, thereby effacing the “particularities of self” in favor of a uniform national ethos defined by the monologism of heroic self-sacrifice.⁹⁸ By entombing, consecrating, and memorializing dead soldiers at section 60 according to the designs and arrangements of WWI and WWII military cemeteries, section 60 substitutes personal, individuated, and historically grounded memories of 21st-century military casualties for the de-contextualized abstraction of national martyrdom. It also converges histories of 21st-century US military violence with “The War to End All Wars” and “The Good War.”⁹⁹

If the metonymic reduction of a dead soldier at section 60 reiterates modern military traditions in order to regulate the available commemorative habits and styles through which

visitors can commemorate dead US soldiers in the context of the War on Terror, what sorts of sociopolitical relationships and dissident possibilities do such disciplinary memory practices engender? The rhetorical achievement of section 60 is that it invites visitors and the bereaved to remember 21st-century military casualties according to a selectively romanticized memory of US military grandeur that ultimately rationalizes and emboldens the contemporary execution of US military violence and power. Accordingly, the imitation of modern military cemeteries at section 60 operates as an insidious prophylactic fantasy. Specifically, it allows visitors to heal feelings of grief and loss (i.e., “move on”) as long as they forget – or at least contain – the intimate memories of the dead, critical historical accounts of modern American warfare, and disturbing consequences of America’s War on Terror.¹⁰⁰ According to one grieving widow at section 60, “there’s so many people who hate the war . . . and it’s hard to hear the things they say when you feel like your husband died for his country.”¹⁰¹ As this comment suggests, challenging fantasies of redemptive sacrifice impedes processes of healing and renders dissident memories upsetting. Paradoxically, even as these soldiers are colloquially recognized as “dying for their country,” memorializing the dead at section 60 within the entrenched commemorative idiom of heroic self-sacrifice conceals the extent to which Congress actively legitimated global forms of organized violence and then encouraged citizens to get involved at their own detriment. Despite the truism that “the soldier’s grave is the greatest preacher for peace,” what section 60 demonstrates is that even dead soldiers can be mobilized for the war effort. Metonyms of heroic self-sacrifice de-historicize 21st-century US military casualties in ways that deflect remembrance away from the legacies of US military violence and the

culpability of the US military in promoting conditions of warfare that compromise the lives of its soldiers.

Importantly, despite these traditional military norms that govern the habits and style of entombment, consecration, and memorialization throughout Arlington, families of soldiers who are buried at section 60 have launched effective challenges against cemetery protocol to expand the available acts of remembrance and commemoration at the cemetery. After some of the bereaved discovered in 2009 that Arlington personnel were damaging and then discarding the mementos left at gravesites in section 60, veterans and civilians began to protest the cemetery's longstanding prohibition against personalizing grave markers. Although army historians began to store mementos and ornaments "worthy of retention" at Fort Belvoir in 2009, many families of dead service members remained troubled and angry with the institutional protocol to remove families' personal objects.¹⁰² According to a mother whose son was killed in Afghanistan in 2010, "I understand they want to maintain the dignity of the cemetery . . . but they have to understand a lot of families are grieving, and this [the act of adorning the gravesite of a loved one] is how we cope with grief."¹⁰³ In the words of another grieving mother, "This is part of our grieving process . . . We personalize the graves. We don't just stand there and pray."¹⁰⁴ Additionally, some of the bereaved argued that the removal of these personal objects exacerbates the ease with which Americans relegate the violence and death of America's War on Terror to the fringes of public memory. Robin Chapman Stacey, whose son was killed in combat in 2012, eloquently articulates the personal and political stakes involved in preserving the personal adornment of the graves at section 60:

I can understand why those whose lives have been untouched by this century's wars might want to push such recent losses quickly into the past. I can

understand why they would prefer the word "sacrifice" to remain abstract, why they would find it easier to handle a national cemetery in which the lives of the dead remain buried, hidden and out of sight . . . But that is precisely why it is so important that the dead of these wars . . . be a visible part of our nation's understanding of what war is, what sacrifice means. These war dead should be allowed to live for as long as possible. The day will come when their graves cease to be decorated, when those who cry for them in the dark of night are no more. But that is not where we are. Now these dead should be allowed to live in the only way they can: through the acts of remembrance of those who knew them and loved them.¹⁰⁵

What Stacey's comments poignantly express is the personal imperative for the bereaved to grieve for 21st-century American military casualties in ways that exceed the de-historicized abstraction of national martyrdom. Angered and hurt by the state-sanctioned impediments placed on their struggles to commemorate loved ones at section 60, the bereaved demanded more flexible cemetery policies that would allow them to lend expression to their modes of protracted grief (e.g., "that is not where we are") while also enhancing the publicity and cultural resonance of soldiers' deaths (e.g., "[the dead must] be a visible part of our nation's understanding of what war is").¹⁰⁶

Due to the rhetorical power of personal ephemera (e.g., personal letters, children's drawings, photographs) in mediating interactions between the living and the dead, families of the dead demanded military personnel to safeguard the mementos left at the graves and preserve the families' redesign of the grave markers. As of 2014, approximately 28,000 items have been collected and stored off-site and some families hope to eventually use the ephemera to build a public memorial.¹⁰⁷ Although cemetery administrators initially rejected any proposed changes to cemetery policy on the grounds that the "Arlington National Cemetery is not the Vietnam War Memorial," public dissent eventually persuaded military personnel to preserve one photograph and a handmade memento by a grave between October 2013 and April

2014.¹⁰⁸ Even if preserving the metonyms of dead soldiers is only a temporary rearrangement in the rhetorical norms of memorialization at section 60, such a change nonetheless troubles the dominant sociopolitical relationships between citizens, soldiers, and the military, especially in the context of the War on Terror. What these families accomplished is that they compelled the Department of the Army to adopt commemorative habits and styles similar to those found at the VVM in hopes of memorializing the dead beyond a decontextualized idiom of national martyrdom and “sacrifice” that first emerged in the wake of the Civil War. By converging some of the “restive” commemorative styles associated with the VVM into the design of Section 60, these families aggravated an historical crisis in the representation of contemporary warfare, one that underscores the ongoing legacies and urgencies of 21st-century US military violence as well as the persistence of loss and grief endured by the recently bereaved.

Publicizing Intimate Histories of Unwarranted Loss: “Arlington West” and the Dissident *Dunamis* of Irony

Whereas Section 60 is regulated in large measure by statist traditions, the *Arlington West Memorial* (“Arlington West”) is a “community assemblage” that recites as well as revises modern and post-Vietnam commemorative habits and styles within the context of America’s War on Terror.¹⁰⁹ Designed “to honor the fallen and wounded, to provide a place to grieve, to acknowledge the human cost of war, [and] to encourage dialogue among people with varied points of view,” “Arlington West” refers to two temporary and malleable installations that veterans and civilians have assembled and dismantled on the beaches of Santa Monica and Santa Barbara every Sunday since 2003.¹¹⁰ Each installation shares an uncanny resemblance to the style of domestic and overseas US military cemeteries insofar as they feature rows of thousands of white, wooden crosses as well as the occasional Star of David and crescent moon.

Initially, “Arlington West” included one grave marker for each soldier who was killed while serving in America’s recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. However, the magnitude of US casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan prompted an exponential expansion of the memorial since 2003, and each installation now features over 3000 “grave markers,” 300 of which are painted red to represent ten killed soldiers each. (Volunteers decided to limit the “grave markers” to 3000 as they were beginning to overrun the beach.)



Figure 3: The *Arlington West Memorial* during a Sunday night.
Photo Credit: Paul Wellman/*Santa Barbara Independent* (2007)
Permissions provided by the photographer (see the Appendix)

“Arlington West” is also markedly different from US military cemeteries. Most notably, “Arlington West” is not a graveyard but an arrangement of individual cenotaphs. Even as each cenotaph appears to resemble the uniform style of the gravestones at national cemeteries, a closer look reveals that many of the “grave markers” at “Arlington West” include an array of

personal mementos (e.g., photographs, letters). Reminiscent of the commemorative practices that crystallized at the VVM, friends and families of dead soldiers often participate in acts of “inventive augmentation” that supplement the cenotaphs with intimate memories of the dead.¹¹¹ “Arlington West” is also unlike US military cemeteries, because each installation is located within busy Californian thoroughfares and the Santa Monica installation, in particular, is adjacent to an amusement park, beachside sports bars, and a downtown mall. Consequently, although the memorial is organized by Veterans for Peace, the densely populated locations of “Arlington West” attract a complicated arrangement of “deliberate” and “accidental” visitors who cannot be defined according to one demographic or political ideology.¹¹² Marked by the unpredictable modes of attendance, the congested and bustling surroundings, the dissimilarity and malleability of the “grave markers,” and the absence of corpses, “Arlington West” is not a reflection of US military cemeteries as much as it is a peculiar doppelgänger of them.

where taken-for-granted regimes of symbolic action are “captured” and then refashioned so that the “seams of political texts” are rendered “visible/revisable.”¹¹⁵ Within the context of “Arlington West,” irony operates as a “distinctive civic ethos,” one that captures the traditional commemorative metonyms found at “official” military cemeteries in order to renegotiate and reconfigure the rhetorical habits and styles through which audiences commemorate contemporary military casualties and assess the legacies and urgencies of US military violence in the 21st century.¹¹⁶

To begin, the design of “Arlington West” features a *mélange* of modern commemorative metonyms popularized by WWI and WWII military cemeteries, as evidenced by the symmetrical arrangement of white wooden grave markers, the flag-draped caskets featured at the front of the memorial, the hyper-nominalization of all US military casualties during the War on Terror, and the sounds of Taps. Moreover, the name of the memorial invokes one of the most widely recognizable and culturally valued military cemeteries in American public consciousness (i.e., “Arlington”). Such an association not only codifies the memorial as a national shrine. It also consecrates 21st-century US military casualties into the pantheon of military martyrs. Despite the signage that identifies the memorial *vis-à-vis* Arlington, however, it is noteworthy that “Arlington West” also recites popular metonyms found in overseas military cemeteries. Specifically, the memorial features “grave markers” in the form of crosses and Stars of David – perhaps due to the iconicity of such symbols in popular representations of American military history (e.g., *Saving Private Ryan*) – rather than rounded slabs of white granite. This assortment of familiar sepulchral codes demonstrate that “Arlington West” is not simply invoking the iconography of one particular military cemetery, as much as it is harnessing

popular rhetorical fragments from a variety of 20th-century military cemeteries. The arrangement of these various metonyms lends a heightened degree of cultural legibility and credibility to a memorial for 21st-century US military casualties. Moreover, it also invites visitors to assume that “Arlington West” is just a makeshift rehearsal of modern commemorative traditions within the context of the “War on Terror.”

Yet, what at first glance appears to be a simple imitation of the uniformity and triumphalism found at WWI and WWII military cemeteries ironically transforms into something considerably unlike them. The memorial to “the Fallen” recites traditional commemorative tropes of heroic self-sacrifice only to revise them and, in so doing, assign legitimacy to alternative expressions of mourning and remembering 21st-century US military casualties. The “strategic moment of [ironic] reversal” emerges once visitors encounter post-Vietnam commemorative habits and styles. As noted above, veterans and civilian volunteers actively encourage the bereaved to adorn and individuate the cenotaphs with mementos of the dead, including boots or dog tags, bibles, beer bottles, placards, jewelry, photographs, and so on. Unlike the VVM and section 60, however, volunteers at “Arlington West” will not only retrieve and store the mementos, but also laminate the paper nameplate of the deceased and re-adorn the cenotaph each Sunday. As of 2012, approximately 1600 mementos are re-placed each week. The preponderance of intimate memorabilia that adorn the grave markers attests to the unfinished processes of grief and loss and, in so doing, complicates the historically opaque *pastness* of heroic self-sacrifice.

The Santa Barbara installation incorporates additional post-Vietnam commemorative practices by featuring a raised POW/MIA flag as well as a makeshift VVM that lists the names of

soldiers who died serving tours in Iraq. Both of these metonyms recall the national anguish of the Vietnam War by implying that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan share a semblance of controversy with the histories of US military intervention in Vietnam.¹¹⁷ By placing the restive commemorative symbols associated with the Vietnam War alongside the modernist triumphalism of WWI and WWII military cemeteries, “Arlington West” retains the gravity of soldiers’ national sacrifice without reducing the memories of their sacrifice to an almost-programmatic celebration of the histories of US military violence. This confluence of competing commemorative traditions from 20th-century American military culture does not so much debunk or negate the idea of heroic self-sacrifice as much as it asks visitors, “sacrificed, but at what cost?”¹¹⁸ For many visitors, it is difficult to answer such a question when inhabiting a space that is so palpably haunted by the “ghost of Vietnam.” According to one soldier who visited the memorial, “I feel like I’m fighting for something I don’t believe . . . we don’t know why we are fighting there.”¹¹⁹ Another visitor states that “[W]hen you see the crosses here . . . you know there is no reason for these boys and women to be dying.”¹²⁰ “Arlington West,” then, ironically deploys metonyms of heroic self-sacrifice alongside personal mementos and post-Vietnam metonyms of national trauma in order to impede the cultural amnesia assigned to national martyrdom and invite visitors to acknowledge that 21st-century conditions of soldiers’ deaths are neither a thing of the past nor an inevitable march toward progress.

In addition to arranging the formal features of WWI and WWII military cemeteries in relation to post-Vietnam commemorative habits and styles, “Arlington West” stages a doubly ironic maneuver. Specifically, each installation recites 20th-century commemorative traditions within the context of 21st-century US military malfeasance so as to mobilize dissident memories

against US military institutions and policies. For example, “Arlington West” includes a wall devoted to the week’s worth of news related to the war in Afghanistan, which frequently features information regarding human rights violations conducted by the US military (e.g., torture, execution, abuse of civilians and detainees) or the refusal of the US military to acknowledge the alarming frequency of PTSD symptoms and diagnoses. Alongside such troubling information are signs that reference either the magnitude of deaths produced by US military occupations (“If we were to honor the Iraqi dead, it would fill this entire beach”) or quote President George Bush’s cowboy rhetoric that was so prominent at the onset of the war (e.g. “Bring it On – July 2, 2002” or “Mission Accomplished – May 1, 2003”). Furthermore, by memorializing soldiers who died in Iraq with a black wall reminiscent of the VVM, “Arlington West” poignantly draws a parallel between the treatment of Vietnam War veterans and the treatment of soldiers who served in Iraq, i.e., the government which these generations defended has willingly refused to ameliorate their physical and psychological trauma. Finally, US soldiers who died in Iraq and Afghanistan are mourned alongside Iraqi and Afghani civilians who were killed by the US military, as well as soldiers who committed suicide after returning home from war.¹²¹ In this ironic register, even if military sacrifice is a virtue, it is nonetheless dictated by a deranged military apparatus. According to one veteran, “It seems like a lot of us are being lied to, you know . . . it’s not the media I don’t trust; it’s the government.”¹²² Another visitor claims that “I feel that [the dead soldiers’] trust in this country was betrayed. These are all good people, and they all didn’t need to die like this . . . I think they were led into this way by bad leadership in this country.”¹²³ For these visitors and veterans, mourning and commemorating the death of a soldier is inextricably bound with dissident expressions of anger

against the contemporary histories of military wrongdoing and trespass.¹²⁴ As another visitor put it, “I feel a sense of grief for [the dead]. And, at the same time, I walk away feeling angry. So that grief, it manifests into anger as I’m walking away.”¹²⁵

By ironically deploying the metonyms of US military casualties and the ways in which audiences encounter them, “Arlington West” subverts the rigidified encounters with such symbols in hopes of promoting habits of commemorating 21st-century military casualties beyond romanticized histories of US military combat. In publicizing and circulating intimate memories and metonyms of dead US soldiers that vividly illustrate the impasses of grief and loss, “Arlington West” corrodes the emblems of national martyrdom that bury the dead under a de-historicized memory of American righteousness and triumph. Moreover, the memorial renders the death of soldiers as the byproduct of an unjust military institution thereby framing commemoration and mourning as a catalyst for political dissent against US military policies. Finally, “Arlington West” enables visitors to forge alliances and relationships with others: volunteers and veterans collectively assemble and take apart the memorial every Sunday; the bereaved often request volunteers to store particular mementos and redecorate the graves each week; veterans (especially soldier welfare workers) frequently provide emotional support to fellow veterans and invite visitors to become more involved with soldier outreach programs; and visitors, volunteers, and veterans alike mourn the death of US soldiers, the injury and harm done to Iraqi and Afghani civilians, and the trauma endured by veterans together. According to one volunteer, “meeting family members [of those who have died] . . . is a big part of what’s kept me here because that’s how I know [“Arlington West”] is really, really making a difference.”¹²⁶ Another volunteer asserts that “We are suddenly bonded together . . . Many tell

me their hopes and fears about someone in the service . . . Neither their politics nor mine seem to matter. We are united by feeling.”¹²⁷ Ultimately, “Arlington West” fosters a way of remembering the dead that problematizes abstracted histories of national martyrdom, mobilizes dissident memories against military malfeasance, and forges vernacular kinships through shared experiences of personal grief and trauma.

Conclusion: “Can We Depict War Without Glorifying It?”¹²⁸

What the *Arlington National Cemetery* and the *Arlington West Memorial* demonstrate is that commemorative metonyms of dead US soldiers found at national cemeteries and memorials are not only state-sanctioned “paramnesic” techniques for obfuscating histories of US military violence. Such commemorative metonyms can also activate vital rhetorical maneuvers for energizing political dissent and disrupting the triumphalist national imaginaries upon which the legitimacy of US military violence and power depends.¹²⁹ One implication is that the rhetorical salience of these metonyms derives from specific historical conditions, and these historical conditions powerfully circumscribe and delimit the available commemorative habits and styles through which vernacular communities can make sense out of – and even dissent against – 21st-century US military violence. The historically entrenched rhetorical norms for entombing, consecrating, and memorializing dead soldiers within official and vernacular memory-places transform US military casualties into highly politicized metonyms that define and restrict how contemporary audiences can comprehend personal and national urgencies involving the War on Terror. Given that these historical constraints come to bear on the possibilities for “remembering otherwise,” it is imperative to evaluate the rhetorical histories

that regulate the contemporary commemorative practices involving the legacies of American warfare.¹³⁰

Such histories highlight the changing cultural attitudes and memories about US military violence, and they underscore communities' reiteration and revision of the dominant and residual rhetorical norms that govern their comprehension of US military violence. Herein lies another implication. Even as entrenched rhetorical norms of entombment, consecration, and memorialization regulate the commemorative habits and styles through which contemporary audiences can remember 21st-century histories of military violence, such rhetorical norms also serve as the inventional resources for crafting dissident memories of dead US soldiers and the wars for which they fought and died. The cultural struggles over the memories of 21st-century US military casualties is a persistent and volatile saga, even in the second decade of America's longest military campaign. The efforts by the bereaved to reform military policies at Section 60 or to erect untraditional makeshift memorials such as "Arlington West" evidences the ongoing political contestation surrounding the available modes of expression that Americans can utilize to interpret the personal and national legacies of contemporary US military violence and power. What the memory work at Section 60 and "Arlington West" indicate is that audiences who are faced with inadequate rhetorical norms of remembrance can augment and reinvent such norms in order to intervene in particular systems of state-sanctioned amnesia. Indeed, as Jay Winter reminds us, "Cultural history is a chorus of voices; some are louder than others, but they never sound alone."¹³¹

A final implication is that irony serves as a potentially transformative trope through which communities can renegotiate and revise historically entrenched norms of

commemoration. During the first decade of America's War on Terror, Americans witnessed a surge in the public memorialization of WWII (e.g., the installment of the *WWII Memorial* at the National Mall, the popularity of cinematic and televisual WWII representations), and it quickly became a trope for misrepresenting the troubling historical circumstances of the War on Terror and neglecting the national trauma of the Vietnam War. As many scholars rightly noted, the rise of WWII commemorative hermeneutics allowed state institutions to "hijack" the histories of WWII in the service of legitimating the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.¹³² "Arlington West," as well as the recent policy changes at Section 60, serve as a poignant cultural intervention against the nostalgic remembrances of WWII. As McDaniel reminds us, irony "can outfit critical consciousness, political activity, self-governance, and the skills through which subjects can participate in civic deliberation on matters of mutual concern . . . If there can truly be a rhetoric of resistance, I suspect, irony would have to be its master trope."¹³³ The critical reframing of Abu Ghraib photographs that highlight the contradictions in democratic principles and military policy, the human rights activists who don the iconic garb of Guantanamo Bay "detainees" so as to protest illicit military tribunals, the presence of military uniforms at DADT protests and Occupy Wall Street encampments, and even the critical re-appropriation of drone imaging technology, illustrate the prevalence of ironic reversal as a vital mode of civic dissent aimed at recovering and reenergizing a democratic public culture. "Arlington West" demonstrates that the ironic mobilization of metonyms traditionally complicit with military culture can facilitate the invention, arrangement, and delivery of dissident practices, upon which a robust a democratic culture depends. Ultimately, if the sanctification of dead US soldiers operates as a state-sanctioned rhetorical mechanism for mobilizing public memory in the service of

contemporary military campaigns, then perhaps what “Arlington West” reveals is the urgent need for profane or impious rhetorics that might revive dissident commemorative acts against futures of 21st-century US military violence and power.

Notes

⁵⁰ Barack Obama, "Statement by the President on ISIL," September 10, 2014, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/09/10/statement-president-isil-1> (Accessed on September 11, 2014).

⁵¹ See Mark Preston, "Americans Back Airstrikes, But Oppose Use of U.S. Troops in Iraq, Syria," *CNN*, September 29, 2014, <http://www.cnn.com/2014/09/29/politics/poll-americans-back-airstrikes/> (Accessed on September 29, 2014).

⁵² Obama, "Statement by the President."

⁵³ Katie Zezima, "Everything You Need to Know About the VA – and the Scandals Engulfing It," *The Washington Post*, May 30, 2014, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-fix/wp/2014/05/21/a-guide-to-the-va-and-the-scandals-engulfing-it/> (Accessed, September 11, 2014); Curt Devine, "Bad VA Care May Have Killed More Than 1,000 Veterans, Senator's Report Says," *CNN*, June 24, 2014, <http://www.cnn.com/2014/06/24/us/senator-va-report/> (Accessed on September 11, 2014); Helene Cooper, "Pentagon Study Finds 50% Increase in Reports of Military Sexual Assaults," *The New York Times*, May 1, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/02/us/military-sex-assault-report.html> (Accessed September 11, 2014).

⁵⁴ Kenneth Burke, *A Grammar of Motives* (1945; repri., Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 503.

⁵⁵ Burke, *A Grammar of Motives*, 506. On surrogacy, see Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 26.

⁵⁶ Paul Achter, "Unruly Bodies: The Rhetorical Domestication of Twenty-First Century Veterans of War," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 96 (2010): 63. See also, Jeremy Engels and William O. Saas, "On Acquiescence and Ends-Less War: An Inquiry into the New War Rhetoric," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 99 (2013), 229; Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage Publications, 1995); Emily Grabham, "'Flagging' the Skin: Corporeal Nationalism and the Properties of Belonging," *Body and Society* 15 (2009): 63-82; Carolyn Marvin and David Ingle, *Blood Sacrifice and the Nation: Totem Rituals and the American Flag* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1999).

⁵⁷ Katherine Verdery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Postsocialist Change* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 127. For some representative studies regarding the deteriorating legitimacy and propriety of dissent in post-9/11 American public culture, see Robert L. Ivie, *Dissent From War* (Bloomfield, CT: Kumerian Press, 2007); Austin Sarat, ed., *Dissent in Dangerous Times* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2005); Michael Butterworth, *Baseball and Rhetorics of Purity: The National Pastime and American Identity during the War on Terror* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2010), 51-79.

⁵⁸ Roger Stahl, "Why We 'Support the Troops': Rhetorical Evolutions," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 12 (2009): 549.

⁵⁹ Jennifer Asenas and Kevin Johnson, "Politicizing Rhetorical Space: The Fallen Soldiers Memorial and the Contestation of Power," *Queen: A Journal of Rhetoric and Power*, www.ars-rhetorica.net/queen (Accessed November 15, 2010).

⁶⁰ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1974), 29; Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (New York: Routledge, 1966), 163; Dickinson et al., *Places of Public Memory*, 25; Raymie McKerrow, "Space and Time in the Postmodern Polity," *Western Journal of Communication* 63 (1999), 275-283. For scholarship that investigates the relationships between space and memory, see Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux du Memoire," *Representations* 26 (1989): 7-24; Carole Blair and Neil Michel, "Reproducing Civil Rights Tactics: The Rhetorical Performance of the Civil Rights Memorial," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 30 (2000): 31-55; Carole Blair, "Reflections on Criticism and Bodies: Parables from Public Places," *Western Journal of Communication* 65 (2001): 271-94; Greg Dickinson, Brian L. Ott, and Eric Aoki, "Memory and Myth at the Buffalo Bill Museum," *Western Journal of Communication* 69 (2005): 85-108; Greg Dickinson, "Memories for Sale: Nostalgia and the Construction of Identity in Old Pasadena," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 83 (1997): 1-27; Elizabethada Wright, "Rhetorical Spaces in Memorial Places: The Cemetery as a Rhetorical Memory Place/Space," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 35 (2005): 51-81; Elizabethada Wright, "Reading the Cemetery, *Lieu du Memoire par Excellence*," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 33 (2003): 27-44; Edward Casey, "Public Memory in Place and Time," in *Framing Public Memory*, ed., Kendall Phillips (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 2004), 17-44; Marouf Hasian Jr., "Critical Museology, (Post)Colonial Communication, and the Gradual Mastering of Traumatic Pasts at the Royal Museum for Central Africa (RMCA)," *Western Journal of Communication* 74 (2010): 128-49; Bryan Hubbard and Marouf Hasian Jr.,

"Atomic Memories of the Enola Gay: Strategies of Remembrance at the National Air and Space Museum," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 3 (1998): 363-85.

⁶¹ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1974), 29; Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (New York: Routledge, 1966), 163; Dickinson et al., *Places of Public Memory*, 25; Raymie McKerrow, "Space and Time in the Postmodern Polity," *Western Journal of Communication* 63 (1999), 275-283. For scholarship that investigates the relationships between space and memory, see Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les *Lieux du Memoire*," *Representations* 26 (1989): 7-24; Carole Blair and Neil Michel, "Reproducing Civil Rights Tactics: The Rhetorical Performance of the Civil Rights Memorial," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 30 (2000): 31-55; Carole Blair, "Reflections on Criticism and Bodies: Parables from Public Places," *Western Journal of Communication* 65 (2001): 271-94; Greg Dickinson, Brian L. Ott, and Eric Aoki, "Memory and Myth at the Buffalo Bill Museum," *Western Journal of Communication* 69 (2005): 85-108; Greg Dickinson, "Memories for Sale: Nostalgia and the Construction of Identity in Old Pasadena," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 83 (1997): 1-27; Elizabethada Wright, "Rhetorical Spaces in Memorial Places: The Cemetery as a Rhetorical Memory Place/Space," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 35 (2005): 51-81; Elizabethada Wright, "Reading the Cemetery, *Lieu du Memoire par Excellence*," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 33 (2003): 27-44; Edward Casey, "Public Memory in Place and Time," in *Framing Public Memory*, ed., Kendall Phillips (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 2004), 17-44; Marouf Hasian Jr., "Critical Museology, (Post)Colonial Communication, and the Gradual Mastering of Traumatic Pasts at the Royal Museum for Central Africa (RMCA)," *Western Journal of Communication* 74 (2010): 128-49; Bryan Hubbard and Marouf Hasian Jr., "Atomic Memories of the Enola Gay: Strategies of Remembrance at the National Air and Space Museum," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 3 (1998): 363-85.

⁶² Carole Blair, "Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites as Exemplars of Rhetoric's Materiality," in *Rhetorical Bodies*, ed., Jack Selzer and Sharon Crowley (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999), 47; For additional scholarship, see Carole Blair and Neil Michel, "The AIDS Memorial Quilt and the Contemporary Culture of Public Commemoration," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 10 (2007): 595-626; Carole Blair, Marsha Jeppeson, and Enricho Pucci, "Public Memorializing in Postmodernity: The Vietnam Veteran's Memorial as Prototype," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 77 (1991): 263-91; Bradford Vivian, *Public Forgetting: The Rhetoric and Politics of Beginnings Again* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 63-88, 133-67; Sturken, *Tangled Memories*, 44-85; Bryan C. Taylor, "Radioactive History: Rhetoric, Memory, and Place in the Post-Cold War Nuclear Museum," in *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials*, ed., Greg Dickinson, Carole Blair, and Brian L. Ott (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2010), 57-86; Jordynn Jack, "Space, Time, Memory: Gendered Recollections of Wartime Los Alamos," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 37 (2007): 229-50; Peter Ehrenhaus, "The Vietnam Veterans Memory: An Invitation to Argument," *Argumentation and Advocacy* 25 (1988): 54-64; Stephen Browne, "Reading Public Memory in Daniel Webster's Plymouth Rock Oration," *Western Journal of Communication* 57 (1993): 464-77;

⁶³ Barbara Biesecker, "Remembering World War II: The Rhetoric and Politics of National Commemoration at the Turn of the 21st Century," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 88 (2002): 393-4.

⁶⁴ V. William Balthrop, Carole Blair, and Michel Neil, "The Presence of the Past: Hijacking 'The Good War'?", *Western Journal of Communication* 74 (2010): 195. See also David Hoogland Noon, "Operation Enduring Analogy: World War II, The War on Terror, and the Uses of History Memory," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 7 (2004): 329-66.

⁶⁵ Barbara Biesecker, "No Time for Mourning: The Rhetorical Production of the Melancholic Citizen-Subject in the War on Terror," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 40 (2007): 152.

⁶⁶ Greg Dickinson, Carole Blair, and Brian L. Ott, ed., *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials* (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 2010), 16. See also, Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 78-116, 29-53; Charles E. Morris III, ed., "Special Issue: The AIDS Quilt at 20: Commemoration and Critique of the Epidemic Text," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 10 (2007): 557-721; Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, The AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 183-219; W. James Booth, *Communities of Memory: On Witness, Identity, and Justice* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 39-71.

⁶⁷ Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London: Verso, 2004), 37. See also, Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable* (London: Verso, 2009). "Official" expressions of memory comes from

John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the 20th Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 13-40. According to Bodnar, "official" technologies for commemorating American history privilege "social unity, the continuity of existing institutions, and the loyalty to the status quo" over communal and vernacular obligations that may animate political dissent and social justice campaigns (13). My use of the term vernacular is informed by the following: Gerard Hauser, "Vernacular Discourse and the Epistemic Dimension of Public Opinion," *Communication Theory* 17 (2007): 333-9; Kent Ono and John Sloop, "The Critique of Vernacular Discourse," *Communication Monographs* 62 (1995): 19-46.

⁶⁸ I borrow the terms "dominant," "residual," and "emergent" from Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 120-6.

⁶⁹ For a definition of "amnesic rhetoric," see endnote 31 in chapter 1.

⁷⁰ Danielle Allen, *Talking With Strangers: Anxieties of Citizenship since Brown v. Board of Education* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 5.

⁷¹ G. Kurt Piehler, *Remembering War the American Way* (London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 15-35.

⁷² Michael Sledge, *Soldier Dead: How We Recover, Identify, Bury, and Honor our Military Fallen* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 33, 135. There are three notable exceptions. First, naval officers financed the construction of the Tripoli monument to commemorate ordinary naval casualties at the Capitol in 1806. In addition, following the Mexican War, the United States built its first foreign military cemetery in Mexico City and Kentucky created the first formal military cemetery for common soldiers in 1847. See Piehler, *Remembering War*, 41.

⁷³ Drew Gilpin Faust, *The Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Vintage Books, 2008), 65.

⁷⁴ Faust, *The Republic of Suffering*, 104; Kristin Ann Hass, *Carried to the Wall: American Memory and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), 35-7; Sledge, *Soldier-Dead*, 97; Ron Robin, *Enclaves of America: The Rhetoric of American Political Architecture Abroad, 1900-1965* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 35.

⁷⁵ Kelly Merrifield, "From Necessity to Honor: The Evolution of National Cemeteries in the United States," *National Park Service*, http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/travel/national_cemeteries/Development.html (accessed April 12, 2013); Sara Amy Leach, "Designing the First National Cemeteries," *National Park Service*, http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/travel/national_cemeteries/Landscape.html (accessed April 12, 2013).

⁷⁶ In response to the War Department's exclusion of confederate casualties from its national cemetery system, confederate organizations such as the "Association for Southern Mothers" took charge of locating and reburying confederate dead. For these organizations, to harness and deploy the memories of confederate casualties was an urgent problem, as such memories could help to consolidate a southern resistance and heritage against the "new" postbellum culture of the "reconstruction" period. See Faust, *The Republic of Suffering*, 243.

⁷⁷ Kurt Piehler, "The War Dead and the Gold State: American Commemoration of the First World War," in *Commemorations; The Politics of National Identity*, ed., John Gillis (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 168-9; Thomas Lacquer, "Memory and Naming in the Great War," in *Commemorations; The Politics of National Identity*, ed., John Gillis (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 160.

⁷⁸ John W. Chambers, ed., *The Oxford Companion to American Military History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 849.

⁷⁹ Piehler, *Remembering War*, 86, 97; Robin, *Enclaves of America*, 5.

⁸⁰ Michael Heffernan, "History/Archive/Memory: A Historical Geography of the US Naval Memorial in Brest, France," *Cultural Memories: Knowledge and Space* 4 (2013): 201-31.

⁸¹ George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 7.

⁸² Piehler, *Remembering War*, 100-1; Robin, *Enclaves of America*, 48.

⁸³ Even as the Tomb of the Unknown seems to homogenize all anonymous US casualties according to one sepulchral form, this does not necessarily bar the bereaved from addressing it as a specific tomb for their deceased loved ones. See Carole Blair, V. William Blathrop, and Neil Michel, "The Arguments of the Tombs of the Unknown: Relationality and National Legitimation," *Argumentation* 25 (2011): 459.

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- ⁸⁴ Robin, *Enclaves of America*, 40. See also, Lacquer, "Memory and Naming," 158; Piehler, "The War Dead," 175; Thomas M. Hawley, *The Remains of War: Bodies, Politics, and the Search for American Soldiers Unaccounted for in Southeast Asia* (London: Duke University Press, 2005), 164. See also, Peter Ehrenhaus, "Commemorating the UnWon War: On Not Remembering Vietnam," *Journal of Communication* 39 (1989): 96-107.
- ⁸⁵ Lacquer, "Memory and Naming," 160.
- ⁸⁶ Hawley, *Remains of War*, 200.
- ⁸⁷ John Bodnar, "Bad Dreams and the Good War," in *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials*, ed., Greg Dickson, Carole Blair, Brian L. Ott (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 2010), 140.
- ⁸⁸ The control of national cemeteries transferred from the War Department to the US Department of Veterans Affairs shortly after WWII.
- ⁸⁹ Hass, *Carried to the Wall*, 3.
- ⁹⁰ Sturken, *Tangled Memories*, 54.
- ⁹¹ The disconnect between the dead and the state is exacerbated by the occasional raising of the POW/MIA flag, an emotionally charged symbol crafted by veterans in an effort to draw attention to the US government's "callous betrayal" of soldiers who continue to be missing-in-action. See Piehler, *Remembering War*, 168.
- ⁹² Although a comprehensive survey on the voluminous scholarly literature about "the Wall" exceeds the parameters of this essay, it is worth noting the following: Sturken, *Tangled Memories*, 44; Hass, *Carried to the Wall*; and Hawley, *The Remains of War*.
- ⁹³ Sturken, *Tangled Memories*, 51.
- ⁹⁴ Sturken, *Tangled Memories*, 51-8.
- ⁹⁵ It is worth noting that families of soldiers of the Vietnam War continued to bury their loved ones in state-sanctioned military cemeteries, despite the social upheaval surrounding the Vietnam War. The precise figures of such burials, however, are immensely difficult to determine due to an absence of available records. For example, Stephen Carney, a spokesperson for the Department of Army (DOA), notified me in an email correspondence that the DOA is "unable to give a specific breakdown" because the department "does not track interments . . . by branch of service, by rank, or by conflict." Stephen Carney, email to the author, October 30, 2014 (available upon request).
- ⁹⁶ "Historical Information," *Arlington National Cemetery*, http://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/historical_information/index.html (accessed July 4, 2011).
- ⁹⁷ Greg Jaffe, "Clean up in Arlington National Cemetery's Section 60 Upsets Families of War Dead," *Washington Post*, October 1st, from http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/cleanup-in-arlington-national-cemeterys-section-60-upsets-families-of-war-dead/2013/10/01/ec5de34e-2ac4-11e3-97a3-ff2758228523_story.html (accessed December 4th, 2013).
- ⁹⁸ Biesecker, *Remembering World War II*, 164. See also, Stahl, "'Support the Troops,'" 549.
- ⁹⁹ Balthrop et al., "The Presence of the Past," 195.
- ¹⁰⁰ This claim supports Winters' argument that acts of mourning at war memorials often require the "art of forgetting" as a means of "avoiding crushing melancholia, of passing through mourning, of separating from the dead and beginning to live again" (115). In contrast to Biesecker's claim that contemporary patriotic rhetorics of war offer "no time for mourning," the rhetoric of heroic self-sacrifice at the Arlington triggers mourning so as to contain critiques of the state and its military. See Winter, *Sites of Memory*, 115; Biesecker, "No Time for Mourning," 393-4; Hawley, *Remains of War*, 158-210.
- ¹⁰¹ *Section 60: Arlington National Cemetery*, DVD, directed by Jon Alpert and Matthew O'Neill (HBO Documentary Films, 2008), 21:20-21:36.
- ¹⁰² Jaffe, "Cleanup in Arlington," (accessed December 4th, 2013). The public animus against the Arlington National Cemetery emerged not only from the mistreatment of families' mementos. The 2010 "grave offenses" debacle also powerfully diminished the credibility afforded to cemetery administrators. After discovering 300 mislabeled graves as well as some "empty graves" containing unidentifiable remains, military personnel conducted an official investigation that ultimately revealed that remains were moved or even discarded without notifying families, and that hundreds of graves were either missing headstones or lacking the necessary records to identify the deceased. Mark Benjamin, "Grave Offenses at Arlington National Cemetery," *Salon.com*, July 16, 2009,

http://www.salon.com/news/feature/2009/07/16/arlington_national_cemetery (accessed July 4, 2011); Mark Benjamin, "Another Mystery Grave at Arlington Cemetery," *Salon.com*, November 22, 2009, http://www.salon.com/news/feature/2009/11/22/unknown_remains (accessed July 4, 2011).

¹⁰³ Jaffe, "Cleanup in Arlington," (accessed December 4th, 2013).

¹⁰⁴ Patricia Sullivan, "Arlington Cemetery Panel Calls for End to Relaxed Policy on Mementos at Grave Sites," *Washington Post*, November 19th, 2013, http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/arlington-cemetery-panel-calls-for-end-to-relaxed-policy-on-mementos-at-grave-sites/2013/11/19/3a8b3988-5151-11e3-9fe0-fd2ca728e67c_story.html (accessed on December 4th, 2013).

¹⁰⁵ Robin Chapman Stacey, "Let Arlington's Dead Live a Little Longer," *Washington Post*, October 6th, 2013, C04.

¹⁰⁶ Cemetery officials persistently establish boundaries that isolate the bereaved from wider audiences, sometimes illicitly. In 2008, for example, a former public affairs director of the Arlington National Cemetery, Gina Grey, discovered that cemetery officials were actively attempting to impose media access to funerals, even when the bereaved requested otherwise. According to Grey, the families from over 60% of all funerals initially requested media coverage. These requests, however, would later be discouraged and even prohibited by the deputy director of the Arlington National Cemetery. After challenging such media restrictions, Grey was promptly fired for retaliation. See Amy Goodman, "Former Arlington National Cemetery Public Affairs Director Says she was Fired for Refusing to Limit Press at Funerals," *Democracy Now!* July 23, 2008, http://www.democracynow.org/2008/7/23/former_arlington_national_cemetery_public_affairs (accessed July 4, 2011).

¹⁰⁷ Sullivan, "Arlington cemetery Panel."

¹⁰⁸ Greg Jaffe, "Arlington Makes Memento Exception in Section with Iraq, Afghanistan Dead," *Washington Post*, October 15, 2013, http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/arlington-makes-memento-exception-in-section-with-iraq-afghanistan-dead/2013/10/15/a77cb46a-35cf-11e3-be86-6aeaa439845b_story.html (access on December 4th, 2013).

¹⁰⁹ Brandon Fastman, "Vietnam Memorial Inspires Arlington West Makeover: Veteran's for Peace Downsize and Turn Focus to Afghanistan," *Santa Barbara Independent*, November 27, 2010, <http://www.independent.com/news/2010/nov/27/vietnam-memorial-inspires-arlington-west-makeover/> (accessed on July 4, 2010); Joe Treasure, "Lines in the Sand," *New Statesman*, (2007): 1.

¹¹⁰ "About Veterans for Peace," <http://www.arlingtonwestsanamonica.org/join.html> (accessed July 4, 2011).

¹¹¹ Blair and Michel, "The AIDS Memorial," 603. Positioning visitors as rhetors is a recurring tactic at vernacular military cemeteries such as *Eyes Wide Shut*. See Ekaterina Haskins, "Ephemeral Visibility and the Art of Mourning: *Eyes Wide Open* Traveling Exhibit," *Rhetoric, Remembrance, and Visual Form: Sighting Memory* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 89-112.

¹¹² Michael A. Rancourt, "Taking the Beachhead: Veterans for Peace on California Beaches," Presented at the California American Studies Association (2013), 17-8.

¹¹³ Burke, *A Grammar of Motives*, 517.

¹¹⁴ James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 168.

¹¹⁵ Michel de Certeau, *The Capture of Speech and Other Political Writings*, trans., Tom Conley (1994, repri., Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 7; De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 117; Burke, *A Grammar of Motives*, 517; James P. McDaniel, "Liberal Irony: A Program for Rhetoric," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 35 (2002): 298-300; David Chidester and Edward Linenthal, ed., *American Sacred Space* (Bloomington, In: Indiana University Press, 1995), 19.

¹¹⁶ James P. McDaniel, "Speaking Like a State: Listening to Benjamin Franklin in Times of Terror," *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 2 (2005): 331; McDaniel, "Liberal Irony," 298-300; Robert Terrill, "Irony, Silence, and Time: Frederick Douglass on the Fifth of July," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 89 (2003): 216.

¹¹⁷ In their analysis of the WWII memorial in Washington D.C., Balthrop, Blair and Neil argue that the condensation of soldiers' deaths to one material symbol (e.g., the Gold Stars at the WWIIM that each represent 100 US casualties) trivializes war and death by subjecting the memories of soldiers to rhetorical processes of "depersonalization, anonymity, and disindividuation." "Arlington West" also condenses the number of casualties to one symbol (i.e., the red cross), suggesting that the design of the memorial is like the WWIIM insofar as it restricts visitors' capacities to acknowledge the magnitude of US military casualties. Although the two memorials

share this similarity, it's worth noting that the use of red crosses was a practical decision based on sanctions placed on the memorial by local municipalities. Moreover, the nominalization of each US casualty from the War on Terror on the black wall amplifies the gravity of loss, thereby counteracting the memorial's condensation of ten dead soldiers to one of the 300 red crosses. See Balthrop et al., "The Presence of the Present," 192.

¹¹⁸ The mobilization of shame marks an important difference between irony as it functions at "Arlington West" and Burke's theory of "humble" or "dialectical" irony. For Burke, "True irony, humble irony, is based upon a sense of fundamental kinship with the enemy, as one *needs* him, is *indebted* to him, is not merely outside him as an observer but contains him *within*, being consubstantial with him" (Burke, *A Grammar of Motives*, 514). For Burke, "humble" irony can facilitate the production of less destructive and violent human relations. Even though Burke and many of the visitors at "Arlington West" may share an investment in mitigating the violence of war, I think it would be problematic to suggest that the visitors, volunteers, and the bereaved feel a "fundamental kinship" with the military industrial complex and its executive leaders that fostered the conditions from which global war flourishes. See Gregory Desilet, "Choosing a Rhetoric the Enemy: Kenneth Burke's Comic Frame, Warrantable Outrage, and the Problem of Scapegoating," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 41 (2011): 340-62.

¹¹⁹ *Arlington West*, 46:30-46:44.

¹²⁰ *Arlington West*, 18:50.

¹²¹ This dimension of "Arlington West" is another recurring trope at counter-memorials such as *Eyes Wide Shut*. See Haskins, "Ephemeral Visibility," 107-8.

¹²² *Arlington West*, 32:45.

¹²³ Scheff, *A Wake by the Pier*, 49:15.

¹²⁴ See also, Erin J. Rand, "Repeated Remembrance: Commemorating the AIDS Quilt and Resuscitating the Mourned Subject," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 10 (2007): 655-80.

¹²⁵ Scheff, *A Wake by the Pier*, 23:40.

¹²⁶ Scheff, *A Wake by the Pier*, 33:09.

¹²⁷ Thomas J. Scheff, "A Wake by the Pier," *New English Review*, May 2010, http://www.newenglishreview.org/custpage.cfm?frm/63029/sec_id/63029 (accessed August 18, 2010).

¹²⁸ See Carole Blair, William Balthrop, Neil Michel, "Mood of the Material: War Memory and Imagining Otherwise," *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies* 13 (2013), 7.

¹²⁹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised ed. (London: Verso, 2006), 4-7. I borrow the term "paramnesia" from the following: Biesecker, "Renovating the National Imaginary" 222; Berlant, *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 57.

¹³⁰ Blair et al., "Mood of the Material," 17.

¹³¹ Jay Winter, *Remembering War: The Great War Between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 136.

¹³² Balthrop et al., "The Presence of the Past"; Biesecker, "Remembering WWII"; Noon, "Operation Enduring Analogy."

¹³³ McDaniel, "Liberal Irony," 323-4.

Chapter 3

“Forgetting Histories of Toxic Military Violence and the Corporeality of Dissident Memory: The Case of the Kelly Air Force Base”

“We’ve felt for a long time the [Kelly AFB’s chemical] contamination caused our sickness. But apparently, we’ll never prove it. We’ll be dead and everyone will forget what caused all of this.”
– Robert Alverado¹³⁴

“So by closing the RAB [Restoration Advisory Board], you’re just allowing TCEQ [Texas Commission on Environmental Quality], EPA [Environmental Protection Agency] and the Air Force just to continue to sweep everything under the rug and, you know, business as usual while we just die and continue to be poisoned from their mistakes in the past.” – Robert Silva¹³⁵

To wage a war is to coordinate violent military assaults against environments and the people who inhabit them. Americans, however, frequently presuppose that the relationships between 21st-century US militarism and environmental destruction materialize only in foreign territories as an unfortunate but nonetheless necessary means for defeating an enemy. State officials and mainstream news outlets commonly frame the military’s decimation of environments in contradictory terms, e.g., routine and anomalous, deliberate and accidental, or even “quick but effective.” Underlying such inconsistent discourses is the misconception that the US military only destroys environments “over there,” such as mountainous regions in Afghanistan, cityscapes in Iraq, and other “battlefields” located external to US borders. Although the US military certainly decimates these widely publicized environments, it is dangerously problematic to locate the environmental consequences of US military violence and power exclusively beyond US soil, as such a limited perspective obscures the powerful and pervasive role of 21st-century US militarism in subjecting American landscapes and populations to everyday conditions of toxicity.

Justified under the banner of “national security,” the Department of Defense (DOD) committed the first decade of the 21st century to obtaining exemptions from some of America’s most vital environmental protections, such as the Clean Air Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Marine Mammal Protect Act, and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.¹³⁶ Meanwhile, the US military – with approximately 8,500 bases strewn across the United States – produces 750,000 tons of toxic waste annually, establishing the US military as the “largest single polluter of any agency or organization in the world.”¹³⁷ Almost 900 of the EPA’s approximately 1,300 superfund sites are military bases or weapons manufacturing and testing facilities. As of 2010, the DOD’s current cleanup program includes roughly 31,000 contaminated sites on more than 4,600 active or former defense properties in the US and other countries.¹³⁸ Given that the US military controls at least 29.7 million acres of land within the US, nearly one in ten Americans (roughly 29 million) live within ten miles of chemically toxic military sites.¹³⁹ Through an array of wartime and peacetime practices – e.g., abandoning undetonated ordinance and obsolete equipment at inactive proving grounds, disposing of cleaning solvents and other chemical materials in topsoil, emitting millions of gallons of fuel (annually) into the air, leaking tons of depleted uranium and other nuclear toxins in water wells – 21st-century US military institutions systematically poison countless environments and populations across the United States.¹⁴⁰ Herein lies a troubling irony – namely, that the US military injures and kills the very same populations and territories it is sworn to protect. Ecological ruin engendered by contemporary US military violence and power, in other words, is not an isolated and removed phenomenon for many Americans. Instead, it is calamitous feature of everyday American life that poses dire

and even fatal consequences for various populations and landscapes across the continental US.¹⁴¹

Although these exigent circumstances have prompted the DOD to adopt some meager courses of redress,¹⁴² the development of a system-wide, environmentally responsible overhaul is not one of them. It is much more common for military institutions and administrators to deploy an array of rhetorical “containment” strategies aimed at suppressing the publicity and history of state-sanctioned toxic fallout. “It is not the leakage of *materials* that poses the scandal,” writes William Kinsella, “but rather the leakage of *discourse* about those materials.”¹⁴³ As environmental communication scholars have persuasively shown, military institutions manage and govern the discursive circulation of toxic leakages through a strategically crafted rhetorical repertoire that often obscures, mystifies, and conceals the memories and urgencies of particular toxic environments.¹⁴⁴ What these containment strategies reveal is that US military institutions retain their hegemony by rendering the ongoing legacies of toxic contamination and exposure invisible and forgettable.¹⁴⁵ Jason Krupar and Stephen Depoe, for example, argue that official military museums and heritage centers frame the toxic history of the Cold War in triumphalist terms in order to “disseminate a particular narrative account that will maintain [the US military’s] viability, status, or power.”¹⁴⁶ In other words, the legitimacy and authority of particular military institutions rests not on the preservation of the US military’s toxic legacy but on its rhetorical invention, one that consigns to oblivion the histories of environmental degradation and bodily attrition engendered by America’s military culture. It is imperative, therefore, for communication and rhetorical studies scholars to investigate the ways that specific US military geographies subject populations and environments to conditions

of toxic violence, as it is precisely within these junctures where discursive mechanisms of military power and control become visible and the subject of critique.¹⁴⁷

Mired by elevated levels of exposure to carcinogens as well as an institutional discourse bent of erasing the public memories of such toxic legacies, the populations who inhabit environments “downwind” from these lethal military installations are “contaminated communities” who live on the brink of oblivion. With little recourse than to endure and often succumb to state-sanctioned conditions of toxic exposure, “downwinders” histories of suffering and death at the hands of the US military function as “subjugated” memories, the publicity and visibility of which could undermine public acceptance of the military’s day-to-day operations.¹⁴⁸ The task at hand for these war-torn populations involves circulating vernacular memories of bodily attrition *vis-à-vis* the military’s toxic operations in hopes that such testimonies will afford them access to vital medical resources and perhaps disrupt the state-sanctioned conditions of toxicity. For Linda Nash, the vitality and health of the body is a powerful way to tell stories of local environments just as environmental health is a powerful way to tell stories about bodies.¹⁴⁹ Similarly, Kevin DeLuca and Phaedra Pezzullo poignantly remind us that environmentalist and environmental justice advocates often rely on embodied performances and expressions of pain in order to evidence the toxic conditions produced by negligent and harmful military institutions.¹⁵⁰ In spite of the US military’s rhetorical “containment” strategies aimed at regulating and suppressing the visibility and publicity of particular histories of toxic fallout, embodied rhetorical performances can symbolize, narrate, and attest to dissident memories of particular toxic military geographies.¹⁵¹

In this chapter, I argue that America's 21st-century war on terrorism is waged against the public remembrance of histories of environmental destruction and bodily attrition. I explore this thesis within the context of the Kelly Air Force Base (Kelly AFB), a seemingly inconspicuous military installation in San Antonio, Texas that exposed nearby populations to lethal carcinogens since the Cold War. This toxic military geography is a fruitful site for rhetorical critique, because it illustrates the discursive "containment" mechanisms through which military administrators put under erasure memories of toxic exposure and bodily attrition. Moreover, the case of the Kelly AFB is also significant, because the toxic legacies of the facility became a matter of public controversy and discord, thereby offering a productive demonstration of the promises and failures of stakeholders' dissident commemorative tactics. Thus, my thesis: commemorative rhetorics of bodily attrition *vis-à-vis* state-sanctioned toxicity are powerful symbolic repertoires of 21st-century US war culture insofar as they enable military institutions to remain unaccountable to its histories and legacies of toxicity as well as afford "contaminated communities" valuable dissident resources to vie for a less caustic future. To substantiate this thesis, I have organized the chapter into four sections. After first offering a truncated historical account of Kelly AFB's toxic history, I then analyze three primary "containment strategies" used by Air Force administrators: (1) technocratic lexicons, (2) myths of ecological renewal, and (3) economic modes of remembrance. By examining military press releases, news reports, and toxicology studies, I argue that these discursive containment strategies suppress histories of toxic military violence by abstracting urgency within a technical jargon, reassuring populations that technology will rehabilitate the environment, and celebrating industrial and commercial growth over human suffering. I then turn to "downwinders'" dissident commemorative tactics

and assess their efficacy in challenging the state's sanitized histories of Kelly AFB's toxic fallout. After reframing toxic contamination – and the rhetorical histories of exposure – as a dominant modality of 21st-century US military violence, I conclude by examining the histories of environmental injustice and cultural struggle at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune which, I suggest, offers scholars a productive scope for assessing dissident commemorative practices against toxic US military violence and power.

Brief Synopsis of the Kelly Air Force Base: A Timeline

Living adjacent to the Kelly AFB in east San Antonio are over 30,000 working-class, predominantly Hispanic residents,¹⁵² many of whom have placed purple crosses on their lawns in order to symbolize neighbors who are afflicted with health complications that many residents believe to be caused by the Kelly AFB's hazardous waste disposal procedures. In 1983, Kelly AFB administrators discovered toxic chemicals – specifically, trichloroethylene (TCE), a jet plane degreaser, and tetrachloroethylene (PCE), a chemical used to strip paint – contaminating the shallow aquifers and topsoil around the base. Eleven years later – after persistent local activism and community-sponsored investigations – the EPA acknowledged that the Kelly AFB exhibited calamitous toxicity levels and requested the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC) to address the problem. In 1995, the TNRCC concluded that the administrators at the Kelly AFB had been “trying to circumvent the regulatory process” for remediating the “extensive environmental contamination at the base.”¹⁵³ Although the TNRCC succeeded in capping roughly 75 contaminated wells that had originally supplied drinking water to the community, the woefully underfunded commission failed to initiate any remediation efforts or to identify additional sources of contamination in the topsoil, air, and waterways.

That same year, the Base Closure and Realignment Commission (BCRC) voted to close the Kelly AFB, and Air Force administrators reassured concerned residents that any contamination would be removed through “natural attenuation” (i.e., the ground water would wash the problem away forever). This didn’t reassure many residents, given that by 1997 over 91% adults and 71% of children living in the area were likely afflicted with an array of health complications such as cancer (e.g., breast, kidney, stomach), Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (i.e., “Lou Gehrig’s Disease”), or birth-related complications. In 1999, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) assessed the air quality around the base and determined that residents were not at risk of “adverse health effects,” despite the discovery of cancer-inducing chemicals.¹⁵⁴ Shortly thereafter, residents working with the Committee for Environmental Justice Action (CEJA) and the Southwest Workers Union (SWU) petitioned the EPA and then-Governor George W. Bush to designate the Kelly AFB as a superfund site in need of enormous and urgent remediation efforts. Both the EPA and Governor Bush rejected the petition and the Kelly AFB officially closed on July 13th, 2001.¹⁵⁵

As of 2012, the Air Force has not only spent roughly 400 million dollars on environmental investigation and cleanup (e.g., extracting contaminated soil, installing a groundwater treatment plant, containing toxic structures within cement encasings). They have also allocated an additional 10 million dollars to the local Environmental Health and Wellness Center where residents can access free health tests and screenings.¹⁵⁶ Nonetheless, residents living adjacent to the base – a region that is colloquially referred to as the “Toxic Triangle” – continue to struggle against their everyday exposure to various toxins and chemicals in the air, land, and water. As of 2013, the Air Force administered cleanup efforts at only 457 of 687

potentially contaminated sites and, in 2006, an underground treatment facility malfunctioned and spilled 45,000 gallons of contaminated water back into the soil and rivers.¹⁵⁷ Rates of birth defects as well as liver and kidney cancer in the Toxic Triangle remain two to three times more than the national average.¹⁵⁸ Moreover, a water main broke in 2011, releasing what Air Force administrators referred to as “a spike in organic vapor concentrations” that contaminated residents’ air quality for weeks.¹⁵⁹ Meanwhile, residents continue to encounter toxic vapors, contaminated waterways, and polluted soil and many of the residents who initiated toxicology investigations in the 1990s, such as Armando Quintanilla and Mary Lou Ornelias, have since succumbed to illness and death. Robert Alvarado and Yolanda Johnson, who have lived adjacent to the Kelly AFB for generations, have begun to identify symptoms of illness and bodily attrition on the bodies of their grandchildren.¹⁶⁰

The Production of State-Sanctioned Amnesia: Discourses of Expertise, Renewal, and Capital

Given that everyday suffering “*functions to attenuate crisis*” at least insofar as “*we can become accustomed to [just about] anything,*” then it is imperative to interrogate the institutional procedures and discursive containment strategies through which US military power produces and sustains everyday conditions of toxicity and bodily attrition.¹⁶¹ In what follows, I argue that conditions of toxicity are sustained, in part, by containing histories of state-sanctioned toxicity within amnestic rhetorics.¹⁶² Three interrelated containment strategies permeate the Air Force’s official accounts of the Kelly AFB’s toxic legacy: (1) technocratic discourse, (2) the myth of ecological renewal, and (3) economic modes of remembrance.

First, following the closure of the Kelly AFB, the Air Force enlisted the rhetorical power of scientific methods and data in order to regulate what does and does not count as “proof” of

toxicity. For example, in a 1999 report issued by the ATSDR, researchers concluded that communities living within the Toxic Triangle exhibit “elevated levels” of cancers and birth defects but that *“current levels of exposure are not expected to make people sick.”*¹⁶³ The study also claims “there is not enough information about past levels of [air] contamination to make conclusions about past levels of exposure.”¹⁶⁴ In 2001, the ATSDR examined the Kelly AFB’s emissions inventory reports to determine whether the documented release of carcinogenic materials into the air could generate *“adverse health effects.”*¹⁶⁵ Rather than ignoring the history of exposure entirely (as with the previous report), the 2001 study concluded that such emissions reports do not signal an *“apparent health hazard.”* In a final 2005 study analyzing two surface wells adjacent to the base, the ATSDR made the same conclusion that *“past exposure from ingestion of water . . . is not an apparent public health hazard, because the concentrations of chemicals in the water combined with the length of estimated exposures were low.”*¹⁶⁶ Emboldened by the truth-value attributed to scientific methods, the Air Force refused to recognize the causal relationships between concentrations of cancer-causing chemicals and the mysterious spikes in cancer-related illnesses and deaths.¹⁶⁷ Although it is difficult to definitively assign causality, the point here is that the Air Force’s control of the system and discourse of science not only sanitizes the Kelly AFB’s toxic past but also places the burden of proof squarely on the shoulders of the dead and dying.

State agencies’ exclusive reliance on scientific discourse presumes a dangerous technocratic premise – namely, that scientific expertise, methods, and idioms are the only valid forms of knowledge with which to assess past and present ecological hazards, as well as forge judgments involving public health and environmental policies. By fetishizing the language and

methods of scientific expertise, technocratic paradigms of public policy and participation powerfully exclude *who* can participate, *what* counts as knowledge, and *how* communities can mitigate their vulnerabilities to toxicity.¹⁶⁸ According to Frank Fischer, the language of scientific expertise “provide[s] an intimidating barrier for lay citizens seeking to express their disagreements in the language of everyday life. Speaking the language of science, as well as the jargon of particular policy communities, becomes an essential credential for participation.”¹⁶⁹ Technocratic discourse produces what Danielle Endres refers to as a “hierarchical divide between experts and the public,” one that fetishizes scientific expertise in terms of objectivity and certainty while simultaneously discrediting other forms of knowledge (e.g., experiential, cultural) as subjective, misinformed, or irrational.¹⁷⁰ By stylizing their selective interpretation of the Kelly AFB’s toxic legacy within a scientific idiom, military administrators not only frame their problematic historical accounts as empirically-valid but also position state-sanctioned experts as the most legitimate and authoritative populations to evaluate matters involving public health and environmental welfare.¹⁷¹ These technocratic values often empower the legitimacy of toxic military institutions, at least insofar as it mystifies and abstracts a community’s struggles against toxic exposure, marginalizes non-expert forms of knowledge, and even alienates residents in the Toxic Triangle from their bodies, their environment, and the causes of their suffering.¹⁷²

Although the Air Force used the toxicology reports as a reason to remain unaccountable to the populations it endangers and kills, toxicologists nonetheless identified dangerous concentrations of cancer-causing chemicals such as Beryllium and DDT, thereby prompting the Air Force to install some modest remediation technologies.¹⁷³ The installment of such

technologies, however, enabled Air Force administrators to deploy a second containment strategy aimed at preempting and nullifying the rhetorical force of residents' public expertise. Specifically, Air Force administrators began to circulate a myth of ecological renewal, one that understated the severity of toxic contamination at the Toxic Triangle and exaggerated the efficacy of remediation procedures. The myth of ecological renewal reassures residents and broader publics that the military has purged any and all toxins from a particular ecology and restored the environmental integrity and safety of the surrounding landscapes. The power of the myth of ecological renewal is that it designates toxic legacies as a thing of the past that has no bearing on the conditions of the present.¹⁷⁴ Such a myth relies on two fantasies as its *modus operandi*. The technophilic myth evokes a wishful desire that "technology will save us from technology" and deploys highly technical euphemisms in order to hyperbolize the efficacy of remediation efforts.¹⁷⁵ For example, the Air Force Real Property Agency (AFRPA) – a military organization charged with administering the environmental cleanup efforts at military properties¹⁷⁶ – claims that the Air Force's environmental treatment methods consist of "innovative remediation technologies" such as "enhanced bioremediation," "bioventing," and "monitored natural attenuation."¹⁷⁷ Such technical jargon implies technological sophistication but conceals the otherwise mediocre and even destructive effects of such procedures. "Enhanced bioremediation" – a process that, according to AFRPA, uses "microbes present in the soil and groundwater [in order] to cleanup contamination" – refers to depositing a carbon source consisting of vegetable oil, mulch and gravel into the ground in an effort to spur the rate at which microbes eat and digest hazardous chemicals.¹⁷⁸ "Bioventing" also hastens microbe consumption and digestion. However, rather than inoculating vegetable oil into contaminated

sites, “bioventing” simply blows oxygen into the topsoil, a process requiring little effort with negligible effects. “Monitored natural attenuation” is a particularly passive strategy that consists of watching and waiting for natural processes like rain and wind to disperse toxins from contaminated sites. The AFRPA is particularly proud of its “Cutting-edge Electric Resistive Heating Technology” which “remove[s] volatile and semi-volatile contaminants” by “utilize[ing] electrodes” to “vaporize” contaminants.¹⁷⁹ Even though such a machine might be scientifically sophisticated, it nonetheless malfunctioned in 2010 and exposed residents to toxic vapors for at least two weeks. Similarly, the “pump and treat systems” that the AFRPA used to cleanse shallow aquifers broke in 2006 and leaked an additional 46,000 toxins into the water. Rather than effectively renewing the vitality of the environment, these technologies serve a symbolic function – that is, while these modest forms of redress may remediate some minor degree of toxicity, they also “create symbolic reassurances and restrict the issue’s scope” by suggesting that such technologies are by themselves sufficient in addressing widespread routes of contamination.¹⁸⁰ Ultimately, the technophilic fantasy desires an image of military technological grandeur that conflates technological sophistication with environmental regeneration. As a result, the technophilic fantasy reimagines the Air Force as a benevolent and techno-savvy military apparatus that is diligently decontaminating the environment and restoring its natural vitality.

The second fantasy presumes that militarism and environmentalism can be compatible ideologies.¹⁸¹ Even though the US military’s endorsement of specific environmental policies may generate some positive consequences for environmental politics,¹⁸² the fantasy of “ecological militarism” within the context of the Kelly AFB works primarily to sanitize the Air

Force's history of contamination and strengthen the benevolent ethos of military institutions.¹⁸³ Specifically, military agencies such as the AFRPA declare that the Air Force's "unwavering commitment to protecting human health and the environment" is evidenced by the reorganization of the Kelly AFB into an industrial park in 2007.¹⁸⁴ The military awarded Air Force administrators of the industrial park – titled the Port San Antonio – with the "Base Redevelopment Community of the Year Award" as well as the "Real Estate Redevelopment and Reuse Award" for "creating positive change in communities."¹⁸⁵ In 2011, Air Force administrators working for the Port San Antonio organized an environmental awareness program for San Antonio residents titled "Every Day is Earth Day." During the event, the Air Force reminded the audience of its promise to "protect and sustain our planet for future generations."¹⁸⁶ In 2012, the Port San Antonio built its first sustainably certified building, planted some trees and shrubs, and began recycling plant materials, leading one military administrator to declare the following: "The Port has gone above and beyond by helping create a tidy environment for the surrounding areas . . . helping ensure that people's first impression of the property is formed even before they arrive."¹⁸⁷ These environmental initiatives work less to mitigate toxicity levels than to produce a veneer of sustainability. Animated by the twin fantasies of ecological militarism and technophilia, the myth of ecological renewal serves as an insidious performance of public amnesia. Specifically, it (a) fetishizes the technological capacities of the Air Force's cleanup efforts, (b) rehabilitates the Air Force's ethos as the purveyor and protector of environmental policies, and (c) relegates the urgent and lethal circumstances of residents' health and safety to an historical pastime.

The third containment strategy began to circulate in 2007 once the military transferred its ownership of the Kelly AFB property to the city of San Antonio. San Antonio city officials agreed to the property transfer on the condition that the military would help to turn the space into an economically viable industrial park. Accordingly, the Port San Antonio along with the help of the Air Force leased its facilities and properties to private military contractors such as Boeing, Lockheed Martin, and Pratt & Whitney who, in turn, use the facilities to manufacture and test Air Force technologies and weaponry. The property that was not leased to the Port San Antonio was simply transferred to the nearby Lackland AFB, where the Air Force could restart routine military operations on the property. In other words, while the Air Force closed the Kelly AFB, many of the same practices and procedures that generated lethal toxicity levels remain, e.g., emitting jet fuels and diesel into the air, accruing hazardous waste such as engine cleaning solvents. So even though ownership over the Kelly AFB properties may have changed, the conditions of toxicity have not. Instead, the transfer of property from military base to industrial park marks an emergent containment strategy through which the Air Force could effectively smother the Kelly AFB's toxic legacy with a teleological narrative of economic fertility and progress. This third commemorative containment strategy involves what Eric Morgan refers to as the "code of economy" and Andrew Ross refers to as a "neoliberal economics of risk," which measures toxic environments in terms of their utility in producing economic growth, employment, and capital.¹⁸⁸ Within the context of the Kelly AFB, the power of economic modes of remembrance is that they neglect to commemorate any histories that do not illustrate commercial and industrial development.

Consider, for example, a July 13, 2011 commemorative ceremony where Port San Antonio administrators congratulated the Air Force and its contractors for transforming a toxic military base into a profitable industrial park. During the commemoration ceremony, president and CEO of the Port San Antonio Bruce Miller reminded audiences that “we owe a debt of gratitude to those who preceded us.”¹⁸⁹ In this case, Miller was alluding to the military contractors who operate at the Port and, in effect, assisted in generating 14,000 jobs as well as a 4.2 billion dollar venture since 2001. Port Brigadier General Robert Murdock followed suit, claiming that the DOD’s involvement in contracting such profitable private industries illustrates the “deep roots it [the military] has in this community and its critical role in shaping the region’s history and future.”¹⁹⁰ One of the highlights pertaining to the ceremony regarded the unveiling of a mural-sized painting depicting two airplane repairmen working diligently as a military aircraft soars overhead toward a bright and promising future. For Miller, the mural serves as a

reminder of the important history that preceded Port San Antonio and foretells of a bright future that continues the aspirations of our workforce . . . it pays tribute to generations past, present, and future connected by this [economic] process of renewal.¹⁹¹

What this commemorative ceremony illustrates is that economic modes of remembrance conceal the toxic legacy of the Kelly AFB with a utilitarian litany of commercial and industrial accomplishments. A brochure circulated during the event succinctly illustrated the codification of history within an economic register:

The 1,900 acres that encompass Port San Antonio are an indelible part of the city’s history and today are a platform that is helping shape the community’s future . . . Since the base’s closure in 2001, Port San Antonio has overseen the redevelopment of the property . . . [T]he Port is a national model for the successful transition of a former military installation . . . [T]here are almost 80 organizations doing business at the site. . . provid[ing] good jobs to over 14,000 people. And with an economic impact of over \$4 billion a year, the Port and its

customers are major contributors to the region's growth . . . And as it looks back on its first 10 years, Port San Antonio salutes its military legacy and the people whose hard work and innovation brought new opportunities to the property – for today and years to come.¹⁹²

Gone from such a narrative is any indication that the Kelly AFB might be implicated in administering hazardous waste disposal practices that continue to contaminate and kill civilians, employees, and soldiers who reside in the Toxic Triangle. Instead, the economic imperative directs public memory according to “the bottom line,” where military institutions are judged according to their industriousness, environments are measured in terms of their exchange-value, and public health is equated with labor.¹⁹³ Within the context of the commemorative ceremony at the Port San Antonio, to imagine the future of economic progress is to forget the ongoing histories of state-sanctioned toxic violence that continue to poison residents who have little recourse but to die quietly.

In sum, these three commemorative containment strategies powerfully animate the politics of power and survival within the Toxic Triangle. Technocratic discourse establishes epistemological hierarchies that privilege scientific expertise while marginalizing non-expert forms of knowledge such as experience or bodily feeling. Kelly AFB administrators deploy technocratic discourse so as to enforce boundaries that regulate what counts as legitimate historical evidence and whose memories of toxic leakage matter. Additionally, the myth of ecological renewal – with its dual mechanisms of technophilia and ecological militarism – hyperbolizes the Air Force's remediation technologies and environmental commitments in an effort to not only rejuvenate the public persona of the Air Force, but also, to reassure residents that toxic contamination and exposure is safely buried in the past. Finally, economic modes of remembrance jettison public memories and historical evidence of the Kelly AFB's toxic legacy in

favor of imagining a sanitized past that unequivocally inaugurated a proud and promising future of industry and capital. Ultimately, these three commemorative containment strategies serve as insidious amnesic rhetorics that dematerialize the conditions of toxicity that compromise residents' health and safety and alienate residents from their corporeal experiences and memories. In repressing the Kelly AFB's toxic legacy, this amnesic rhetoric powerfully sustains the hegemony of lethal military institutions while upholding the junctures of toxicity against which residents struggle for survival.

Dissident Memories of Bodily Contamination: Technocratic Evidence, Globalized Suffering, and Lay-Mapping

In an effort to disturb these technocratic, technofetishistic, and economic modes of state-sanctioned amnesia, residents crafted at least three commemorative counter-arguments, all of which visualized and publicized the toxic legacies of the Kelly AFB through expressions of bodily attrition and decay. First, bounded within the parameters of a technocratic rhetorical culture, residents of the Toxic Triangle crafted "public scientific argument[s]" and enacted modes of "public expertise" in order to lend higher degrees of truth-value and credibility to communal memories of toxic exposure.¹⁹⁴ Residents of the Toxic Triangle accomplished such a task by appointing Dr. Katherine Squibb, a formally trained toxicologist and environmental justice advocate, to conduct independent inquiries and cross-examine state-sanctioned research. Squibb eventually questioned the credibility of the ATSDR reports, claiming that they forgot to account for the various pathways and "additive" consequences of toxic exposure.¹⁹⁵ Squibb also condemned the ATSDR reports for basing its findings on unreliable data sets:

Because of these uncertainties, the ATSDR's conclusion that current air emissions from Kelly AFB are not causing health effects is not well founded, [and] it is questionable as to whether ATSDR's conclusion that no public

exposure to contaminants occurred through the domestic use of groundwater in the past is correct.¹⁹⁶

By mobilizing the power of technical expertise, Toxic Triangle residents called into question the Air Force's sanitization of the Kelly AFB's toxic legacy, prompting a flurry of subsequent toxicological investigations aimed at establishing the role of the Kelly AFB in contaminating the local environment.¹⁹⁷ If scientific idioms serve as a primary communicative mechanism through which the Air Force sanitizes the Kelly AFB's toxic past, then residents of the Toxic Triangle appropriated the discourses of science in order to discredit the Air Force's dubious historical account. In effect, residents' usage of scientific idioms cast doubt on the Air Force's sanitization of environmental exigencies and allowed residents to circulate competing histories of exposure, contamination, and bodily suffering at the Toxic Triangle. Harnessing technical expertise and credibility, then, is a potentially powerful rhetorical maneuver that cracks the state's technocratic containment strategies and expands the possibility for remembering the Kelly AFB's toxic legacy *vis-à-vis* the residents' ongoing attrition and suffering.

It would seem, then, that appropriating technocratic rhetorical norms served as a useful commemorative tactic, at least insofar as it both challenged the Air Force's rhetorical containment of the Kelly AFB toxic legacy and persuaded the DOD to implement a more thorough cleanup process. And yet, there's a troubling consequence to this tactic: once the Air Force installed modest remediation technologies, military administrators could lay claim to the fantasy that the new facility had banished toxicity to historical oblivion. In this way, harnessing technocratic discourse initially disrupted the Air Force's rhetorical containment of the Kelly AFB's toxic legacy. However, it also paved the way for technofetishistic amnesia. What this suggests is that although crafting technocratic arguments is undoubtedly a powerful

commemorative device through which disenfranchised communities lend intelligibility and legitimacy to their dissident memories of toxic exposure, reaffirming the supremacy of a technocratic rhetorical culture nonetheless risks emboldening the very same logics upon which military institutions depend in order to disqualify residents' experiences and memories. Some residents of the Toxic Triangle know this all too well. During one of the Restoration Advisory Board meetings, one resident aptly stated the following: "[W]e can bring all the proof. We can bring the President of the United States to tell you all that it's true and you all will still whitewash everything and Band-aid everything because you all are being trained to do that."¹⁹⁸ Indeed, it is precisely through scientific logics of verifiability that the Air Force casts irrefutable doubt and uncertainty on the causal relationships between exposure to lethal chemicals and their harmful effects on the human body. Whereas residents of the Toxic Triangle devoted considerable time and resources toward verifying the histories of toxic contamination that the military actively seeks to redact, the Air Force can simply finance yet another series of studies that, if nothing else, "complicates" the reliability and widespread implications of residents' toxicological assessments. The methods and language of scientific expertise, then, is a powerful but nonetheless volatile inventional memory practice. It can energize particular environmental justice struggles while simultaneously emboldening the power of the military to dictate histories of military violence and determine their accountability to human and environmental bodies.

Given the promises and failures of remembering toxic legacies through technocratic idioms, residents required an additional commemorative tactic through which to crack the DOD's technocratic amnesia, and the vital logics of environmental justice served such a

purpose. Frustrated by military administrators' unresponsiveness during Restoration Advisory Board meetings, residents affiliated with the Southwest Workers Union (SWU) established the Committee for Environmental Justice Action (CEJA), which united over 400 families living in the Toxic Triangle with similarly "contaminated communities" who live within proximity to toxic US military geographies in North Carolina, Alaska, Costa Rica, Japan, and South Korea. In forging international kinship networks through their shared histories of exposure to US military toxics, residents at the Toxic Triangle began to apprehend their bodily and environmental attrition in terms of globalized systems of racial and class-based disenfranchisement.¹⁹⁹ In 2005, residents organized an international conference and peaceful protest that brought together these disparate communities in order to "open a space to share community realities and experiences and begin to see commonalities among our struggles that cross nation, race, and gender boundaries."²⁰⁰ Organizers contextualized the demonstrations in terms of the US military's worldwide contamination of marginalized communities:

A new global legacy has been created – that of military toxics From Hiroshima to Vieques to bases inside the U.S., the military is one of the largest sources of contamination globally. Atomic weapons, Agent Orange, and toxic materials have all carved a deadly legacy in communities throughout the world for generations to come Even as the military abandons a site or a U.S. base closes, the toxics linger in the air, water, soil, and people causing cancer, birth defects, asthma, muscle and bone diseases, et cetera Within the United States and in many places, this is also a question of environmental racism. Poor communities, Indigenous communities and people of color are most often victimized by military toxics.²⁰¹

In addition to defining the toxic legacies at US military geographies such as the Kelly AFB within broader histories of racist and classist violence, organizers also invited participants to share stories involving their particular experiences living near toxic US military installations.²⁰²

Following firsthand testimonies regarding the worldwide legacies of US military toxins,

hundreds of attendees, participants, and residents of the Toxic Triangle marched through popular thoroughfares in San Antonio wearing t-shirts stating that “Kelly makes me sick,” “Vida Si, Cancer No,” and “we want a cleanup not a cover-up” as well as waving posters declaring that “Kelly AFB contaminates” and “clean up military toxics.”²⁰³



Figure 5: 2005 Environmental Justice March Outside of the Kelly AFB.
Photo Credit: Steve Lerner/MIT Press (2010)
Permissions provided by the photographer (see the Appendix)

Although the CEJA’s “Military Toxics Conference” lasted only a few days and even as the demonstrations and marches occurred infrequently for several years, commemorating the Kelly AFB’s toxic legacy through logics of environmental (in)justice has proven socially productive. First, against the Air Force’s efforts to silence and render invisible the legacies of the Kelly AFB’s toxic history, the environmental justice marches served as acts of public remembrance that attest to the ongoing urgencies of toxic exposure and their lasting consequences on the bodies of Toxic Triangle residents. However, the publicity of the demonstrations extends beyond pedestrians and bystanders in San Antonio. In framing the state-sanctioned contamination of the Toxic Triangle within broader histories of environmental injustice, CEJA organizers

encouraged residents to establish sociopolitical kinship bonds with other “contaminated communities” living near toxic military geographies.

Second, it enabled residents to apprehend their bodily suffering not as an anomalous illness or private misfortune but as a symptom of broader histories of structural violence brought on by toxic US military practices. This point is especially important, because one of the limits of the toxicology reports – both the Air Force’s studies as well as those organized by Toxic Triangle residents – is that they risk decontextualizing histories of toxic exposure from broader national and transnational political forces and contexts (e.g., global disenfranchisement along lines of race and class). If one of the goals of the demonstrations was to assist participants to witness “the first-hand consequences of military toxics that extend far beyond chemical names and geological analyses,” then remembering the Kelly AFB’s toxic legacy *vis-à-vis* global histories of environmental injustice at US military facilities helps to challenge the dehistoricization of technocratic logics.²⁰⁴ Such a commemorative practice, in other words, rejects the technocratic myth (1) that bodily attrition is a private affair caused by some anonymous internal malady, and (2) that environmental contamination is a trivial condition of modern life.

The third commemorative tactic involves remapping the Kelly AFB and the Toxic Triangle with metonyms of bodily contamination, exposure pathways, and personal loss.²⁰⁵ Over the course of several years, residents began placing purple crosses with the name of a loved-one lost to illness on their lawns or around Air Force property. Residents at the Kelly AFB marked the landscape with these cenotaphs in order to memorialize residents who succumbed to their illnesses, as well as to identify the locations of particular exposure pathways that produced

“clusters” of bodily harm in the Toxic Triangle. Diana Lopez, an environmental justice advocate working for the SWU, claims that the crosses operate as a “language of struggling and suffering” whereas another Toxic Triangle resident interprets the crosses as the “image of contamination.”²⁰⁶ As ephemeral memorials, these crosses serve as “the physical and visual embodiment of public affect” that “function to remember the recently, suddenly dead: to make their loss visible and public; to render their deaths memorable.”²⁰⁷ As public rhetorical performances that enact the possibility for apprehending the loss of life caused by state-sanctioned contamination, these crosses operate as public transcripts, at least in the sense that they stand against the Air Force’s interest in forgetting the Kelly AFB’s toxic legacy and privatizing residents’ grief and illness.²⁰⁸ The ephemeral memorials resist such state-sanctioned amnesia by re-territorializing the landscape in terms of loss and risk, an act of “lay-mapping” that marks ongoing experiences of grief as well as potentially toxic exposure routes.²⁰⁹ These purple crosses challenge the technophilic fantasy that the Air Force’s cleanup efforts have consigned toxicity and the loss of life it produced to an historical pastime. As a public invitation to grieve loss and express anger at a toxic military institution, these crosses ultimately reconfigure residents’ spatial and temporal habits of everyday life, marking the landscape as a site of risk and loss located within an historic and ongoing crisis of environmental contamination.²¹⁰



Figure 6: Purple Crosses outside of a home in the “Toxic Triangle.”
 Photo Credit: Steve Lerner/MIT Press (2010)
 Permission provided by the photographer (see the Appendix)

Against the amnesic rhetorics deployed by Air Force administrators, residents of the Toxic Triangle crafted dissident memories of toxic exposure through toxicology reports, environmental justice demonstrations, and makeshift memorials in order to circulate narratives of contamination and exposure *vis-à-vis* the Kelly AFB’s toxic legacy. Such commemorative tactics challenged the Air Force’s rhetorical “containment” of the Kelly AFB’s toxic legacy in a number of different ways. First, they destabilized those scientific “proofs” that disqualify the histories of state-sanctioned contamination as well as the causal relationships between exposure to lethal chemicals and their deleterious effects on human health. Second, they refute the dangerous assumption that the alarming clusters of cancer and other illnesses in the Toxic Triangle are unfortunate coincidences (or the product of individual deficiencies) rather than symptoms of broader histories of environmental injustice. Third, they mark exposure pathways and memorialize recently deceased residents in order to challenge the technocratic fantasy that the air, water, and soil of the Toxic Triangle has been restored to safe and healthy conditions. What these dissident acts of remembrance accomplish is a powerful reframing of

the Kelly AFB's toxic legacies. The histories of contamination and exposure in the Toxic Triangle are not a "thing of the past" that has no bearing on the present, but rather an urgent problem of public health that continues to compromise residents' lives. These dissident memories of bodily decay and death in the Toxic Triangle have produced an array of productive political effects. For example, the residents built transnational environmental justice networks and brought together 400 Toxic Triangle residents in defiance of the Air Force's willful negligence of its own toxic history. In addition, residents even compelled the Air Force to conduct health assessments, install an environmental health and wellness clinic, demolish toxic storage facilities, and even remove toxic soil. These social and institutional transformations have proven vital, as they've significantly reduced many of the toxic risks that threaten the everyday lives of Toxic Triangle residents.

Nevertheless, the example of the Kelly AFB is not simply a "success story," given that residents' health and safety are still mired by exposure to carcinogens that are emitted by the Air Force. As noted above, the Kelly AFB closed in 1995 and the Air Force transferred the contaminated properties over to the Lackland Air Force Base and then leased facilities to military weapons manufacturers such as Lockheed and Martin. In other words, even as the Air Force has started to address its toxic legacies from the 20th century, it nonetheless continues to exact its toxic practices on local environments and populations under different land-use agreements. Perhaps what is most troubling about the US military's toxic legacies, then, is not its mediocre efforts to remediate contaminated properties nor its strategic attempt to "forget" the histories of vulnerability and death that such contamination produced. Instead, what the case of the Kelly AFB reveals is that even as the US military has begun to redress its histories of

contamination and exposure, it nonetheless fails to reform its toxic operations, which ensures that such contamination and exposure will continue “with no end in sight.”

Coda: Toxic Military Violence, Dissident Memory, and the Case of Camp Lejeune

Since the environment is not just a location of military violence but is, in fact, the instrument through which such violence is exerted and exercised, attending to toxic US military geographies prompts us to rethink what counts as 21-century US military violence in the first place. The case of the Kelly AFB demonstrates that waging military violence against environments and the people who inhabit them is not always an extraordinary event that unfolds exclusively in foreign territories and landscapes. Instead, US military violence *vis-à-vis* contamination and exposure unfolds throughout the United States on a register that is slow moving, imperceptible, and quotidian.²¹¹ This toxic mode of US military violence invades seemingly-countless domestic landscapes and then festers after long periods of time below the surface of vision only to make itself known after exacting gradual but nonetheless calamitous damage on environments and populations.²¹² Indeed, what the toxic legacy at the Kelly AFB evidences is that toxic modes of 21st-century US military violence likely derived from the 20th century, when carcinogens developed during the Cold War first began to infiltrate the environment and eventually harm nearby communities. It is precisely this configuration of ubiquity, invisibility, and protracted temporality that allows the legacies and ongoing urgencies of toxic military violence to fade from public recognition and memory. Given these contemporary conditions of state-sanctioned toxicity, scholars must resist framing military violence only as a foreign, unique, and perceptible event, because such a restrictive heuristic

conceals the seemingly invisible histories of “slow death” that compromise American civilian communities.²¹³

If state-sanctioned contamination is not as spectacular, instantaneous, and perceptible as more widely recognized modes of US military violence, then the apprehension of toxic military violence is largely a problem of communication and public memory. However, just as exposure to toxins can deteriorate cognitive processes such as sight and memory, routine exposure to lacunae of memories involving toxic fallout can render their urgencies imperceptible and forgettable. The state’s toxic violence is compounded by the state’s rhetorical violence against the historical evidence of contamination and exposure. Indeed, amnestic rhetorics that conceal histories of toxicity operate as an additional form of 21st-century US military violence insofar as the obfuscation of contamination and exposure exacerbates the very toxic conditions that threaten peoples’ lives. What the commemorative containment strategies at the Kelly AFB illustrate is that not even the dead and dying are safe from an unjust state apparatus bent on consigning to oblivion histories of toxic military violence. For residents living within the Toxic Triangle, bodily attrition and the rhetorical mechanisms that sustain it occur with a degree of regularity, and their memories of toxic exposure and bodily attrition remain one the primary means for holding the Air Force accountable. The task at hand, therefore, is to challenge the state’s misappropriation of history by arranging and presenting a range of dissident memories that might crack the containment strategies used by the state to bolster the US military’s destruction of environments and populations.

Although the case of the Kelly AFB serves as a representative example of the politics of visibility and memory in a time of toxic US military violence, it is worth emphasizing that the successes and failures of communities' dissent against toxicity is contextually specific. Indeed, a comparative analysis of different toxic US military geographies – and the struggles between toxic institutions and the communities they are killing – may yield productive insights into the complexities of dissent *vis-à-vis* the legacies and urgencies of the US military's toxic past. It is for this reason that I want to turn – albeit briefly – to the case of another toxic US military geography that garnered massive notoriety and even instigated federal policy reforms in the 21st century.

Once heralded as “the world’s most complete amphibious training program,” Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune is now more notoriously known as the “largest and worst incidence of a poisoned water supply in history.”²¹⁴ First erected in 1941 to the southeast of Jacksonville, North Carolina, Camp Lejeune is an immense 152,000 acre military installation, consisting of approximately 180,000 residents, several civilian and military airstrips, eighty firing ranges, movie theaters, a K-12 public school, recreational beaches, and even a golf course.²¹⁵ In order to provide potable water to hundreds of thousands of residents and employees, the facility depends on an intricate water management system involving 100 wells, eight treatment facilities, and over 1,500 miles of pipes to pump millions of gallons of water on any given day.²¹⁶ The water supply and management system was believed to be safe for almost 40 years. It was only after the implementation of the Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974 that the Navy began to apprehend the toxic calamity hidden within the base’s drinking water.²¹⁷

As early as October 1980, William C. Neal Jr., the Army Lab's chief of laboratory services, wrote to Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Atlantic Division (LANTDIV) that recent samples from two residential wells suggest that the water is "HIGHLY CONTAMINATED."²¹⁸ After two months and a subsequent water assessment, Neal Jr. again urged LANTDIV that the drinking water exhibits "HEAVY ORGANIC INTERFERENCE" and "YOU NEED TO ANALYZE FOR CHLORINATED SOLVENTS."²¹⁹ In a final report written in February 1981, Neal Jr. explicitly warned Marine Corps administrators that the "WATER IS HIGHLY CONTAMINATED WITH OTHER CHLORINATED HYDROCARBONS (SOLVENTS!)."²²⁰ Meanwhile, Jennings Laboratories, a contractor for Navy engineers, conducted a similar water assessment in 1981, concluding that wells used to provide water to the most densely populated residences exhibited a dozen harmful volatile organic compounds (VOCs) such as trichloroethylene (TCE) and perchloroethylene (PCE).²²¹ The Marine Corps then hired two contractors to conduct independent toxicology investigations in 1982, both of whom alerted base commanders that "peak" levels of TCE and PCE had contaminated several wells.²²² By 1984, base commanders discovered that an arterial gas line was leaking directly into a treatment system that provided water to hospitals, a school, and residences in Hadnot Point and Terawa Terrance.²²³ Base commanders channeled water from supposedly clean wells in order to flush out carcinogens from the contaminated treatment system. To their dismay, officials discovered that the seemingly clean water was also contaminated. By spring 1985, the Marine Corps officials closed ten wells due to the existence of lethal quantities of Benzene, TCE, and vinyl chloride.²²⁴ Unfortunately, faced with a pending water shortage during the summer, officials chose to reopen the contaminated wells for two years.²²⁵ By 1987 and after subsequent toxicology

assessments, scientists identified various contaminated sites at Camp Lejeune such as: The Hadnot Point fuel farm where over 20,000 gallons of fuel leaked into the aquifer; “Lot 203” where “just about every type of hazardous waste imaginable” was buried including diesel, DDT, and various PCBs; a chemical and burn dump for pesticides, cleaning solvents, and gas; a decrepit underground storage tank that had been leaking 1,500 gallons of fuel each month since the early 1960s; and at least eight additional sites where hazardous chemicals such as mercury, fuel sludge, electrical equipment, pesticide-laced water, munitions, 20,000 gallons of battery acid, and over 400,000 gallons of waste oil and fluids were dumped.²²⁶ In short, the enormous water system at Camp Lejeune had been saturated with lethal carcinogens for decades and Marine Corps officials were made aware of a looming toxic fallout as early as 1980. Years later, public health advocates and governmental agencies estimated that over one million marines and their families consumed poisonous drinking water at Camp Lejeune between the 1960s and 1980s.²²⁷

Rather than remediating the poisonous drinking water in a “quick but effective” manner, Marine Corps officials chose to impede residents’ apprehension of the toxic crisis by shrouding the histories of contamination and exposure within a rhetoric of secrecy and misinformation. Officials refused to notify residents that their drinking water was contaminated with dangerous carcinogens before 1985. They also publicly downplayed the lethality of exposure to such carcinogens for decades. For example, in one of the first public notices about the existence of carcinogens in the drinking supply, Major General L.H. Beuhl misled residents and employees at Camp Lejeune, asserting that even though “minute (trace) amounts of several organic chemicals have been detected in the water,” there are “no

definitive state or federal regulations regarding a safe level of these compounds” and that the temporary closure of wells is merely a “precaution.”²²⁸ (It is worth noting here that the EPA disagreed and argued as early as 1985 that Camp Lejeune must be immediately considered for placement on the National Priorities List.²²⁹) Writing for a base newspaper in 1988, Assistant Chief of Staff Facilities Colonel Thomas Dalzell misled readers by claiming that “We [Marine Corps officials] were not aware [that VOC’s] might have been in the ground water and we have no information that anyone’s health was in any danger at that time.”²³⁰ In a 1989 article for *Globe*, another base official misrepresented the Marine Corps’ response to the contamination crisis, suggesting that the carcinogen levels “were not near the EPA limit” and that “we always take measures to go at least a step beyond what is required by law and to ensure we don’t provide water that is unsafe for those using it.”²³¹ Later that year, the EPA placed Camp Lejeune on the National Priorities List. For much of the 80s, Marine Corps officials erased and obfuscated Camp Lejeune’s toxic past with an arsenal of falsehoods and understatement that, in turn, hindered residents’ recognition of their past exposures, present-day illnesses, and rapidly diminishing futures.

Officials’ rhetoric of secrecy and misinformation almost succeeded in redacting Camp Lejeune’s toxic past had the ATSDR not published a report on the histories of birth defects at Camp Lejeune in 1994. In the report, the ATSDR claimed – rather suspiciously – that the groundwater contamination and gasoline vapors posed “no apparent health hazard” to residents. However, the study also observed that birth-related “complications” and deaths were alarmingly common at the facility during the 70s and 80s and more thorough public health assessments are needed to identify the cause.²³² Following the public release of the

ATSDR's report in 1997, news agencies throughout the United States began to investigate and scrutinize the Marine Corps' rhetorically sanitized account of the water contamination crisis at Camp Lejeune. Indeed, the possibility that the Marine Corps was responsible for injuring and perhaps even killing marines proved to be an irresistible and newsworthy scandal. Unlike the case of the Kelly AFB, the histories of contamination and exposure at Camp Lejeune developed into a national controversy that – as I will describe in more detail below – helped residents challenge their vulnerabilities to the US military's toxic legacy. Herein lies an important question: how did the legacies and urgencies of the water contamination crisis at Camp Lejeune become a matter of national dissension whereas the Kelly AFB toxic past has been reduced to an unmemorable casualty of US military violence and power in the 21st century?

To begin, the conditions of toxic fallout and political dissent at Camp Lejeune and the Kelly AFB are both animated in large measure by technocratic discourses that either salvage histories of contamination and exposure or invalidate such histories as nonexistent or inexplicable. Residents of the Toxic Triangle are powerfully disadvantaged by technocratic discourses, because the Air Force could invest vast financial resources toward producing seemingly objective "toxicology assessments" that suppressed any evidence linking contamination, exposure, and bodily decay. Given the cultural sanctity attributed to "the troops" in the US, however, the possibility that the Marine Corps was complicit in poisoning marines and their families sparked a national controversy, one that made the scientific assessments of Camp Lejeune's drinking water available to higher degrees of public scrutiny. For example, the same institution that assisted the Air Force in suppressing the histories of contamination and suffering at the Kelly AFB played a vital role in building a scientific history of

Camp Lejeune's toxic past. In 2003, the ATSDR surveyed 12,000 parents of children born at Camp Lejeune between 1968-1985, concluding that childhood cancer rates were 15.7 times higher than the national average and neural tube defects (e.g., spinal bifida and anencephaly) were 265 times the national average.²³³ Although the Marine Corps failed to communicate Camp Lejeune's toxic past to marines and their families for over 20 years after officials first began to recognize poisons in the water supply, the ATSDR's 2003 report demanded a public response from military administrators and base commanders.²³⁴ By 2009, the ATSDR completed a water modelling assessment of the Terawa Terrance water well and treatment plant, concluding that the wells were contaminated with PCEs at 170 times more than acceptable levels between 1957 and 1987.²³⁵ Such a damning scientific archive of Camp Lejeune's water supply starkly contrasts with the lacuna of evidence the ATSDR produced in the case of the Kelly AFB. What can be inferred from this contrast is that the ATSDR can occasionally assist environmental justice struggles, but only when the population whose public health histories are under assessment are "grievable" lives.²³⁶ Put differently, whereas the Air Force treated the poor, Hispanic residents of the Toxic Triangle as a "disposable" community, the ATSDR could not afford to produce lackluster or unreliable reports of "our nation's heroes."²³⁷

In an effort to counter the ATSDR's growing scientific archive of the histories of contamination and exposure at Camp Lejeune, the Marine Corps solicited the National Research Council (NRC) to assess the validity of the ATSDR's methods and findings. The NRC concluded that "it cannot be determined whether diseases and disorders experienced by former residents and workers at Camp Lejeune are associated with their exposure to

contaminants in the water supply because of data shortcomings and methodological limitations.”²³⁸ In an insidious amnesic maneuver, the NRC blamed the “methodological limitations” on the inadequacy of scientific knowledge. Specifically, the committee claimed that decades of research on the public health effects of TCE and PCE are insignificant and the historical evidence of exposure at Camp Lejeune is “inadequate/insufficient.”²³⁹ The committee ultimately concluded that the whole endeavor of science to illuminate problems of public health is a fool’s errand: “Science does not allow the committee to determine the cause of a specific case of disease . . . for diseases that can have multiple causes that develop over a long period of time.”²⁴⁰ Although the ATSDR publicly condemned the NRC’s conclusions,²⁴¹ the NRC report nonetheless enabled Veterans Affairs to temporarily postpone medical assistance to Camp Lejeune residents who had been receiving treatment for their illnesses.²⁴² The ATSDR’s and NRC’s competing scientific archives about Camp Lejeune’s toxic past affirms an earlier conclusion: that although technocratic discourse is a powerful tool for validating histories of toxic fallout, such expertise is frequently used by powerful institutions to “disprove” histories of contamination. Unlike Toxic Triangle residents, however, the ATSDR validated Camp Lejeune’s toxic past, which not only further publicized the plight of marines and their families but also placed more constraints on the Marine Corps to erase Camp Lejeune’s water contamination crisis from the public record.

As with the case of the Kelly AFB, the dissident struggles involving Camp Lejeune’s toxic past were largely a product of grassroots advocacy campaigns that helped to crack the US military’s bulwark of secrecy and misinformation. However, whereas Hispanic civilians executed most of the dissident struggles against the Air Force, the environmental justice

campaigns involving Camp Lejeune were initially coordinated almost exclusively by male, Marine Corps veterans. Perhaps the most outspoken veteran was Jerry Ensminger, a Master Sargent stationed at Camp Lejeune throughout the 70s and 80s and the father of a six year-old daughter who died of leukemia in 1985. After the ATSDR's 1992 report became public in 1997, Ensminger attributed his daughter's death to the base's contaminated water and began contacting other residents and gathering information about their health histories. Eventually, Ensminger connected with Tom Townsend, a Major stationed at Camp Lejeune in 1967 and the father of a two year-old son who died from birth-related complications. In 2002, Townsend acquired thousands of classified documents through Freedom of Information Act requests. Mike Partain – a survivor of breast cancer who was born at Camp Lejeune in the late-1960s – organized these classified documents and released them in 2003 on his website, "The Few, The Proud, The Forgotten." The website is an enormous archive for Camp Lejeune's toxic past, as it includes thousands of classified documents, the ATSDR's public health assessments, minutes from Congressional meetings, "stories of those exposed," obituaries, and an active message board. "The Few, The Proud, The Forgotten" now serves as an online hub for thousands of Camp Lejeune marines and residents, many of whom visit the website to review classified military documents, share testimonies of bodily attrition and bereavement, and relay advice for diagnosing illnesses and obtaining medical assistance. Against the US military's effort to reduce public health emergencies to a disconnected set of discreet, individual misfortunes, "The Few, The Proud, The Forgotten" serves as an archive of historical information with which marines and their families can recollect their suffering and loss in terms of the Marine Corp's environmental injustices during the Cold War. Moreover, in reconnecting Camp Lejeune

residents with one another, the website effectively consolidates and mobilizes a population's variegated histories of bodily attrition and death against a military institution bent on forgetting its toxic history completely.

As "The Few, the Proud, The Forgotten" continued to expand, Partain realized that approximately one hundred male marines stationed at Camp Lejeune had been diagnosed with breast cancer, which marks the largest cluster of male breast cancer cases in United States history. In an effort to counter the NRC's technocratic dismissal of the ATSDR's scientific histories of contamination and exposure at Camp Lejeune, Partain – with the help of the breast cancer research organization, Art BeCAUSE, and photographer David Fox – designed a calendar titled "Men, Breast Cancer, the Environment: A Photographic Journey". The calendar consists of twelve black-and-white photographs and captioned testimonials, each of which offers an intimate account of a male – often white-skinned – veteran baring his mastectomy scar(s) before the camera. Following its release, the calendar achieved significant cultural

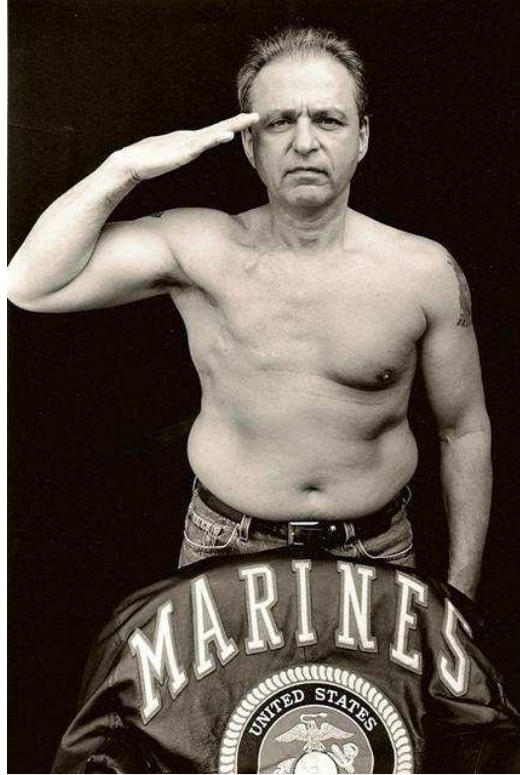


Figure 7: Marine Combat Veteran Jim Fontella.
Photo Credit: David Fox/Art BeCAUSE (2008)
Permissions provided by the photographer (see the Appendix)

circulation throughout a variety of print and online news outlets such as *The New York Times*, *CNN*, and *The Washington Post*. As Partain recalls, “The media was [sic] fascinated by the story . . . It was such an irony that the roughest, toughest men in the world were being affected by a women’s disease.”²⁴³ Although one could discount Partain’s observation as upholding a problematic stereotype about gender and health – namely, that women’s bodies are weaker and more vulnerable to illness than the bodies of so-called “tough men” – his point nonetheless highlights a powerfully persuasive feature of the calendar.²⁴⁴ Specifically, Partain’s observation foregrounds that the cultural resonance of the calendar is derived, in large measure, by a gendered and nationalistic opposition between the strength and resilience of male veterans’ bodies and weakness and defenselessness of female civilians’ bodies. Within the context of

dominant breast cancer discourse in the US, this gendered and nationalistic opposition would imagine breast cancer exclusively on the bodies of female civilians while foreclosing the possibility that male veterans also endure and, in some cases, survive breast cancer. By depicting male veterans baring their mastectomy scars, the calendar blends these gendered and nationalistic oppositions in order to astonish viewers and then reallocate the legibility of the “breast cancer survivor” onto the bodies of male veterans. If one of the rhetorical constraints animating remembrances of toxic military violence involves the protracted and seemingly imperceptible consequences that toxins produce in bodies, then “Men, Breast Cancer, the Environment: A Photographic Journey” foregrounds the male veterans’ mastectomy scars as a visual testament to the histories of contamination and exposure at Camp Lejeune.

However, even as “Men, Breast Cancer, the Environment: A Photographic Journey” invented a promising dissident tactic for visualizing and memorializing histories of toxic US military violence, the cultural resonance of this breast cancer awareness calendar also illustrates a troubling dynamic between identity and legibility, especially when compared to the case of the Kelly AFB. To put it bluntly: gendered, racial, and nationalistic privileges afford the suffering of male – mostly white – veterans more recognition in 21st-century US war culture than other demographics and populations who may be particularly vulnerable to toxic US military violence. In addition to the absence of male breast cancer cases in the Toxic Triangle, the residents – most of whom are Hispanic civilians – do not get to appeal to veteran status and whiteness as a currency of grievability. Whereas Camp Lejeune veterans could invoke their masculinity, whiteness, and military service as a means with which to garner public visibility against the Marine Corp’s amnestic rhetorics of secrecy and misinformation, Toxic Triangle

residents' efforts to publicize and commemorate their suffering *vis-à-vis* toxic military violence was hampered by the Air Force's willful amnesia as well as broader structures of racisms and nationalism. It is precisely for this reason that the political achievements of Camp Lejeune veterans must be remembered not only as a successful enactment of dissent against military violence and power. It must also be remembered that the success of such dissident activities were empowered by a set of gendered, racial, and nationalistic privileges.

The veterans' advocacy work – along with the ATSDR's public health assessments – succeeded in challenging the Marine Corp's efforts to suppress the visibility and public memory of Camp Lejeune's toxic past. In recent years, for example, there has been a range of cinematic and scientific memory practices that continue to publicize the history of contamination and exposure at Camp Lejeune, such as an award-winning documentary, *Semper Fi* (2011), the implementation of the 2012 "Jenny Ensminger Act", and two additional ATSDR reports that confirm the lethality of Camp Lejeune's drinking water.²⁴⁵ In crafting a range of dissident archives (e.g., scientific, congressional, testimonial) and then circulating those archives throughout a range of mediated platforms (e.g., news agencies, documentaries, websites), veterans produced vital cultural transformations including federal policy reforms, health care packages for Camp Lejeune residents, a range of public health assessments financed by the Department of Defense, and a digital network through which veterans and their families can make sense of their bodily attrition in relation to the histories of contamination and exposure at Camp Lejeune. Notwithstanding the positive political effects of these dissident commemorative practices, there are still countless numbers of Camp Lejeune residents who

continue to suffer and die as a result to their past exposures to poisonous water. In short, there is still work to done.

Given that the legacies and ongoing urgencies of Camp Lejeune's toxic past achieved massive cultural resonance, the rhetorics of dissent and control at Camp Lejeune serve as productive examples with which to derive conclusions about the cultural politics of visibility and memory in a time of toxic US military violence. First, technocratic discourse constrains as much as it enables environmental justice struggles. Residents of the Toxic Triangle routinely confronted ATSDR reports that dismissed their memories of exposure and bodily decay whereas Camp Lejeune residents found an unlikely ally in the ATSDR. What both case studies demonstrate is that although scientific discourse and expertise is an indispensable rhetoric for legitimizing dissident memories of toxic military violence, this commemorative idiom often privileges institutions that have more financial resources to incentivize scientific conclusions. Second, online platforms such as "The Few, The Proud, The Forgotten" are immensely powerful resources for nourishing archives of dissident memory, forging cross-regional identifications, and enhancing political collaborations. Although Toxic Triangle residents did not produce a centralized hub of dissent and remembrance, the international conference of military toxics consolidated critical remembrances of a globally toxic past. Third, the tactic of lay-mapping is a productive dissident tactic for memorializing histories of toxic violence within US military geographies. Whereas Toxic Triangle residents depend on this tactic to memorialize dead loved ones as well as warn community members of toxic exposure routes, Camp Lejeune residents have not yet utilized this tactic. Although hundreds of thousands of residents who were once stationed at Camp Lejeune have relocated throughout the continental United States, erecting

temporary memorials and signage that attest to the histories of exposure and bodily decay could nourish dissident memories of Camp Lejeune's water contamination crisis for years to come. Finally, gendered, racial, and nationalistic privileges circumscribe which dissident memories achieve popular circulation. Due to the national sanctity assigned to "the troops," – as well as the cultural celebration of warrior masculinity and xenophobic militarism – the toxic violence against white, male veterans receives a higher degree of legibility, whereas any populations that deviate from such identity categories will be constrained by various modes of disenfranchisement and disposability. What the comparison between the Kelly AFB and Camp Lejeune offers is a range of promises and failures related to technocracy, online networking, spatial mapping, and identities. Perhaps one task for scholars of communication and rhetorical studies is to attend to the state's troubling appropriation of the past, and to articulate and assemble the historical contingencies, counter-narratives, and dissident memories that call into question those institutions that prolong conditions of state-sanctioned violence, toxic or otherwise.

Notes

¹³⁴ Michael Barajas, "Questions Linger Over Kelly AFB Contamination Even After Property Changes Hands," *Peoples Movements Assembly*, October 12, 2011, <http://peoplesmovementsassembly.blogspot.com/2011/10/military-toxics.html> (Accessed June 9, 2014).

¹³⁵ "Kelly Restoration Advisory Board transcript, October 9th, 2012, John F. Kennedy High School Auditorium, San Antonio Texas, <http://www.afcec.af.mil/shared/media/document/afd-121024-025.pdf>, 48-49 (Accessed June 9, 2014).

¹³⁶ Robert Durant *The Greening of the U.S. Military: Environmental Policy, National Security, and Organizational Change* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2007), 226-245.

¹³⁷ Barry Sanders, *The Environmental Costs of Militarism* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2009), 50; Earth Talk, "U.S. Military – The World's Largest Polluter," *politicalaffairs.net*, November 1, 2010, <http://www.politicalaffairs.net/u-s-military-the-world-s-largest-polluter/> (Accessed June 9, 2014). Moreover, US military consumption of oil has risen to over 330,000 barrels each day since 2001 and the US Air Force devours over 2.5 billion gallons a year. See Joseph Nevins, "Greenwashing the Pentagon," *Commondreams.org*, June 14, 2010, accessed from <https://www.commondreams.org/view/2010/06/14-1>.

¹³⁸ Rachel Woodward, *Military Geographies* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 13; "Communities Seek Accountability for Military Pollution," *Commondreams.org*, March 23, 2009, <https://www.commondreams.org/newswire/2009/03/> (Accessed June 9, 2014).

¹³⁹ Haynes, "Military Hazardous,"; Woodward, *Military Geographies*, 13; H. Patricia Haynes, "Military Hazardous Waste Sickens Land and People," *Truthout.org*, August 4, 2011, <http://truth-out.org/news/item/2377:military-hazardous-waste-sickens-land-and-people> (Accessed June 9, 2014).

¹⁴⁰ To be sure, US war-making has a long history. During the early 20th century's "world wars," the US witnessed a proliferation of bases and training facilities, weapons manufacturing and testing operations, and overt military campaigns. By the early 1990s and in the wake of the five decades of the Cold War, the US documented over 19,000 contaminated sites in over 1,700 facilities. While military real estate has diminished considerably since the latter-half of the 20th century – due in large measure to the creation of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) in the 1990s – military operations on the existing bases in the 21st century nonetheless accelerated. Moreover, private military manufacturing firms also proliferated in the 21st century, thereby increasing weapons production and waste disposal. See Seth Shulman, *The Threat at Home: Confronting the Toxic Legacy of the U.S. Military* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992); J.R. McNeill and David S. Painter, "The Global Environmental Footprint of the U.S. Military, 1789-2003," in *War and the Environment: Military Destruction in the Modern Age*, ed., Charles E. Closmann (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2009), 23; David Havlick, "Militarization, Conservation, and US Base Transformations," in *Militarized Landscapes: From Gettysburg to Salisbury Plain*, ed., Chris Pearson, Peter Coates, and Tim Cole (London: Continuum, 2010), 113-133; Anne Marie Todd, *Communicating Environmental Patriotism: A Rhetorical History of the American Environmental Movement* (London: Routledge, 2012); William J. Kinsella, Ashley R. Kelly, and Meagan Kittle Autry, "Risk, Regulation, and Rhetorical Boundaries: Claims and Challenges Surrounding a Purported Nuclear Renaissance," *Communication Monographs* 80 (2013): 278-301; Kate Brown, *Plutopia: Nuclear Families, Atomic Cities, and the Great Soviet and American Plutonium Disasters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

¹⁴¹ For more on the everydayness of militarism, see Chris Cuomo, "War in Not Just an Event: Reflections on the Significance of Everyday Violence," *Hypatia* 11 (1996): 754-780; Jeffrey Sasha Davis, ed., "Military Natures: Militarism and the Environment," Special Issue in *The Journal of War and Culture Studies* (2007): 131-134; Rachelle M. Bernazzoli and Colin Flint, "Embodying the Garrison State?: Everyday Geographies of Militarization in American Society," *Political Geography* 29 (2010): 157-166; Edmund Russell, "Afterward: Militarized Landscapes," in *Militarize Landscapes: From Gettysburg to Salisbury Plain*, ed., Chris Pearson, Peter Coats, and Time Cole (London: Continuum, 2010), 229-237.

¹⁴² "On the Record with Katherine Hammack, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installation, Energy, and Environment," *Sustainability: The Journal of Record* 6 (2013): 22-25.

¹⁴³ William J. Kinsella, "Nuclear Boundaries: Material and Discursive Containment at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation," *Science as Culture* 10 (2001): 171.

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- ¹⁴⁴ William Kinsella and Jay Mullen, "Becoming Hanford Downwinders: Producing Community and Challenging Discursive Containment," in *Nuclear Legacies: Communication, Controversy, and the U.S. Nuclear Weapons Complex*, ed., Bryan Taylor, William Kinsella, Stephen Depoe, and Maribeth Netzler (New York: Lexington Books, 2007), 73-107; William Kinsella, "One Hundred Years of Nuclear Discourse: Four Master Themes and Their Implications for Environmental Communication," in *Environmental Communication Yearbook 2*, ed., S. Senecah (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2005), 49-72; Michael Reich, *Toxic Politics: Responding to Chemical Disasters* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991); J. David Cisneros, "Contaminated Communities: the Metaphor of 'Immigrant as Pollutant' in Media Representations of Immigration," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 11 (2008): 569-602.
- ¹⁴⁵ Bryan Taylor and William Kinsella, "Introduction: Linking Nuclear Legacies and Communication Studies," in *Nuclear Legacies: Communication, Controversy, and the U.S. Nuclear Weapons Complex*, ed., Bryan Taylor, William Kinsella, Stephen Depoe, and Maribeth Netzler (New York: Lexington Books, 2007), 73-107; Phaedra Pezzullo, "Toxic Tours: Communicating the 'Presence' of Chemical Contamination," in *Communication and Public Participation in Environmental Decision Making*, ed., Stephen Depoe, John Delicath, and Marie-France Aeppli Eisenbeer (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2004), 235-254; Bryan Taylor, "Organizing the 'Unknown Subject': Los Alamos, Espionage, and the Politics of Biography," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 88 (2002): 33-49; "Phaedra Pezzullo and Stephen Depoe, 'Everyday Life and Death in a Nuclear World: Stories from Fernald,'" in *Public Modalities: Rhetoric, Culture, Media, and the Shape of Public Life*, ed., Daniel Brouwer and Robert Asen (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2010), 85-108.
- ¹⁴⁶ Jason Krupar and Stephen Depoe, "Cold War Triumphant: The Rhetorical uses of History, Memory, and Heritage Preservation within the Department of Energy's Nuclear Weapons Complex," in *Nuclear Legacies: Communication, Controversy, and the U.S. Nuclear Weapons Complex*, ed., Bryan Taylor, William Kinsella, Stephen Depoe, and Maribeth Netzler (New York: Lexington Books, 2007), 138. For an additional discussion involving environmentalist politics and perils of systemic forgetting, see Kevin Michael DeLuca and Lisa Slawter-Volkeneing, "Memories of the Tropics in Industrial Jungles: Constructing Nature, Contesting Nature," *Environmental Communication* 3 (2009): 1-24.
- ¹⁴⁷ On "military geographies," see Gregory Hooks and Chad Smith, "Treadmills of Production and Destruction: Threats to the Environment Posed by Militarism," *Organization and Environment* 18 (2005): 19-37; P. Whitney Lackenbauer and Matthew Farish, "The Cold War on Canadian Soil: Militarizing a Northern Environment," *Environmental History* 12 (2007): 920-50; Chris Pearson, Peter Coates, Tim Cole, ed., *Militarized Landscapes: From Gettysburg to Salisbury Plain* (London: Continuum, 2010); Peter Coates, Tom Cole, Marianna Dudley, and Chris Pearson, "Defending Nation, Defending Nature?: Militarized Landscapes an Military Environmentalism in Britain, France, and the United States," *Environmental History* 16 (2011), 2.
- ¹⁴⁸ Michael Foucault, *Power Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings*, ed., Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 78-109.
- ¹⁴⁹ Linda Nash, *Inescapable Ecologies: Environment, Disease, and Culture in the History of California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).
- ¹⁵⁰ Drawing on the work of Elaine Scarry and Susan Sontag, Phaedra Pezzullo argues that bodily pain – especially in the context of environmental justice struggles – serves as a vital source of dissident invention, especially amongst communities who have diminished material resources and claims to legitimacy. Writes Pezzullo: "Critical to addressing and remedying various kinds of corporeal pain, then, is our ability (or inability) to express that pain to others. If we do not find more satisfying modes by which to convey pain, we will continue to be less equipped as a people to reduce the amount of pain collectively felt in the world. The inexpressibility of pain – the difficulties we face when presented with the task of telling another of our pain and of appreciating physical pain that is not our own – is, in part, what increases the power of pain's impact on our bodies and lives." Phaedra Pezzullo, *Toxic Tours: Rhetorics of Pollutions, Travel, and Environmental Justice* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2009), 73. See also, Kevin Michael DeLuca, *Image Politics: The new Rhetoric of Environmental Activism* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1999).
- ¹⁵¹ While Stephen Depoe and John Delicath remind us that "'the environment' . . . is a symbolic construct created and organized through discourse," readers must not lose sight of the materialities of war-torn landscapes and bodies, as it is precisely in the dematerialization of environmental contamination and bodily attrition that deranged institutions remain unaccountable to its complicity and involvement in public suffering and death. See

Stephen Depoe and John Delicath, "Introduction," In *Communication and Public Participation in Environmental Decision Making*, ed., Stephen Depoe, John Delicath, and Marie-France Aepli Elsenbeer (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2004), 4; Stacy Alaimo, *Bodily Natures: Science, Environment, and the Material Self* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010), 1-20.

¹⁵² I use the label "Hispanic" here deliberately. Labels such as "Hispanic," "Latina/o," and "Chicana/o" (for example) have a long history of political struggle, and my usage of the term "Hispanic" should not be interpreted as a "safe umbrella term" for a diversity of ethnicities, races, and nationalities. Instead, I use this politically charged moniker only because this is the identity category with which most residents choose to identify themselves in press interviews and testimonies. See Michelle A. Holling, "Retrospective on Latin@ Rhetorical-Performance Scholarship: From 'Chicano Communication' to 'Latina/o Communication?,'" *The Communication Review* 11 (2008), 293-322.

¹⁵³ "Kelly Air Force Base: San Antonio's Dumping Ground," *Texas Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility*, March 17, 2000, <http://www.txpeer.org/toxictour/kelly.html#11> (Accessed June 9, 2014).

¹⁵⁴ Lerner, *Sacrifice Zones*, 185.

¹⁵⁵ See Michael Barajas, "Military Toxics!"; Steven Lerner, *Sacrifice Zones: The Front Lines of Toxic Chemical Exposure in the United States* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2010), 177-194.

¹⁵⁶ Lerner, *Sacrifice Zones*, 185-186.

¹⁵⁷ Lerner, *Sacrifice Zones*, 185.

¹⁵⁸ Steve Lerner, "San Antonio, Texas: Contamination From Kelly Air Force Base is Suspected of Causing Sickness and Death Among Residents in Adjacent Latino Community," *The Collaborative on Health and the Environment*, August 23, 2007, accessed from <http://www.healthandenvironment.org/articles/homepage/1907>; Ramiro Escamilla, "Kelly Air Force Base Contamination, A Dying Issue," *Examiner.Com*, July 24, 2009, <http://www.examiner.com/article/kelly-air-force-base-contamination-a-dying-issue> (Accessed June 9, 2014).

¹⁵⁹ Air Force Real Property Agency, "Kelly Restoration Advisory Board," October 11, 2011, 65, <http://www.afcec.af.mil/shared/media/document/afd-111222-031.pdf> (Accessed June 9, 2014).

¹⁶⁰ Lerner, *Sacrifice Zones*, 181.

¹⁶¹ Phaedra C. Pezzullo and Stephen P. Depoe, "Everyday Life and Death in a Nuclear World: Stories from Fernald," in *Public Modalities: Rhetoric, Culture, Media, and the Shape of Public Life*, ed., Daniel Brouwer and Robert Asen (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2010), 86, 103.

¹⁶² For an elaboration on the concept, "amnesic rhetoric," see endnote 30 in the introduction of this dissertation.

¹⁶³ "Public Health Assessment, Kelly Air Force base, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas," Prepared by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, September 9, 1999, <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/hac/pha/pha.asp?docid=147&pg=0> (Accessed June 9, 2014).

¹⁶⁴ ATSDR, the 1999 "Public Health Assessment."

¹⁶⁵ "Health Consultation, Past Air Emissions, Kelly Air Force Base, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas," Prepared the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, September 27, 2006, http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/HAC/pha/Kelly-AFB_10192006/KellyAFBPastAirHC092706_part1.pdf (Accessed June 9, 2014).

¹⁶⁶ "Health Consultation, Past Exposure to Drinking Water from On-Base Wells 313 and 314, Kelly Air Force Base, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas," Prepared the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, 2005, <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/HAC/pha/pha.asp?docid=101&pg=1> (Accessed June 9, 2014).

¹⁶⁷ Air Force Real Property Agency, "Completion of Former Kelly AFB's Largest Environmental Cleanup Project Paves the Way for Whole Base Transfer," U.S. Air Force Civil Engineer Center, July 1, 2009, <http://www.afcec.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123320102> (Accessed June 9, 2014). In response, officials and researchers working for the state sought to identify other possible causes of cancer. One study financed by the state proposed – in a flagrant execution of racism disguised as science – that the cancer clusters in the Toxic Triangle may be derived from excessive tortilla or alcohol consumption. See Natalie M. Johnson et al., "Aflatoxin and PAH Exposure in a U.S. Population with a High Incidence of Hepatocellular Carcinoma," *Sci Total Environ* 23 (2010): 6027-2031.

¹⁶⁸ Woodward, *Military Geographies*, 35-37. Michael R. Reich, *Toxic Politics: Responding to Chemical Disasters* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 188-190.

¹⁶⁹ Frank Fischer, *Citizens, Experts, and the Environment: The Politics of Local Knowledge* (London: Duke University Press, 2000), 23-24. See also, E. Johanna Hartelius, *The Rhetoric of Expertise* (Lexington, KY: Lexington Books, 2011).

¹⁷⁰ Danielle Endres, "Science and Public Participation: An Analysis of Public Scientific Argument in the Yucca Mountain Controversy," *Environmental Communication* 3 (2009): 51. For more rhetorical analyses involving the democratic ramifications of technical language and expertise, see Thomas Goodnight, "The Personal, Technical, and Public Spheres of Argument: A Speculative Inquiry into the Art of Public Deliberation," *Journal of the American Forensic Association* 18 (1982): 214-227; Karin Backstrand, "Civic Science for Sustainability: Reframing the Role of Experts, Policy-Makers and Citizens in Environmental Governance," *Global Environmental Politics* 3 (2003): 24-41; William Kinsella, "Public Expertise: A Foundation for Citizen Participation in Energy and Environmental Decisions," in *Communication and Public Participation in Environmental Decision Making*, ed., Stephen Depoe, John Delicath, and Marie-France Aepli Elsenbeer (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2004), 83-95; Stephen Depoe, "Public Involvement, Civic Discovery, and the Formation of Environmental Policy: A Comparative Analysis of the Fernald Citizens Task Force and the Fernald Health Effects Subcommittee," in *Communication and Public Participation in Environmental Decision Making*, ed., Stephen Depoe, John Delicath, and Marie-France Aepli Elsenbeer (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2004), 157-173; Benjamin K. Sovacool, "Spheres of Argument Concerning Oil Exploration in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge: A Crisis of Environmental Rhetoric?," *Environmental Communication* 2 (2008): 340-361; Danielle Endres, "Science and Public Participation: An Analysis of Public Scientific Argument in the Yucca Mountain Controversy," *Environmental Communication* 3 (2009): 49-75; Johanna Hartelius, ed., "Rhetorics of Expertise" [Special Issue] *Social Epistemology* 25 (2011); Danielle Endres, "Sacred-Land or National Sacrifice Zone: The Role of Values in the Yucca Mountain Participation Process," *Environmental Communication* 6 (2012): 331.

¹⁷¹ William Kinsella, "One Hundred Years of Nuclear Discourse: Four Master Themes and Their Implication for Environmental Communication," in *Environmental Communication Yearbook 2*, ed., S. Senecah (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2005), 53; William Kinsella, "Rhetoric, Action, and Agency in Institutionalized Science and Technology," *Technical Communication Quarterly* 14 (2005): 303-310.

¹⁷² Kinsella, "One Hundred Years," 53.

¹⁷³ Greg Harman, "Lower Leon Creek Stands Out in Regional Toxic Watershed Survey," *San Antonio Current*, August 4th, 2010, accessed from <http://www2.sacurrent.com/blog/queblog.asp?perm=70482> (Accessed June 9, 2014).

¹⁷⁴ Pezzullo and Depoe, "Everyday Life and Death," 92.

¹⁷⁵ Pezzullo, "What Gets Buried," 136

¹⁷⁶ Most environmental initiatives executed by the military are administered by the U.S. Army Environmental Command, an umbrella agency for the DOD that oversees projects such as the Defense Environmental Restoration Program as well as agencies loosely affiliated with environmental responsibilities such as the Air Force Base Conversion Agency (AFBCA) and the Air Force Center for Engineering and the Environment (AFCEE).

¹⁷⁷ "Fact Sheet: Enhanced Bioremediation," Air Force Real Property Agency, <http://www.afcec.af.mil/shared/media/document/afd-130208-065.pdf> (Accessed June 9, 2014).

¹⁷⁸ "Fact Sheet: Enhanced Bioremediation," Air Force Real Property Agency, <http://www.afcec.af.mil/shared/media/document/afd-130208-065.pdf> (Accessed June 9, 2014).

¹⁷⁹ Air Force Real Property Agency, "Completion of Former Kelly AFB's Largest Environmental Cleanup Project Paves the Way for Whole Base Transfer," U.S. Air Force Civil Engineer Center, July 1, 2009, <http://www.afcec.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123320102> (Accessed June 9, 2014).

¹⁸⁰ Reich, *Toxic Politics*, 186-186.

¹⁸¹ For more on this dynamic, see Jennifer A. Peeples, Richard S. Krannich and Jesse Weiss, "Arguments for What No One Wants: The Narratives of Waste Storage Proponents," *Environmental Communication* 2 (2008): 40-58; William J. Kinsella, Ashley R. Kelly, and Meagan Kittle Autry, "Risk Regulation, and Rhetorical Boundaries: Claims and Challenges Surrounding a Purported Nuclear Renaissance," *Communication Monographs* 80 (213): 278-301; David Havlick, "Militarization, Conservation, and US Base Transformations," in *Militarized Landscapes: From Gettysburg to Salisbury Plain*, ed., Chris Pearson, Peter Coates, and Tim Cole (London: Continuum, 2010), 122; Stefano Longo and Joseph Baker, "Economy "VERSUS" Environment: The Influence of Economic Ideology and Political Identity on Perceived Threat of Eco-Catastrophe," *The Sociological Quarterly* (2014), 3; Woodward, *Military Geographies*, 96.

¹⁸² Research that promotes the environmental integrity of the US military are rare. Moreover, most of the essays that I've encountered that attempt to redeem the environmental histories of the US military are alarmingly anti-historical. For examples see, Mark P. Nevitt, "Defending the Environment: A Mission for the World's Militaries," *University of Hawaii Law Review* (2014), 1-115; Sarah E. Light "The Military-Environmental Complex," *The British Columbia Law Review* 55 (2014), 1-79.

¹⁸³ Katherine T. McCaffrey, "Environmental Struggle After the Cold War: New Forms of Resistance to the U.S. Military in Vieques, Puerto Rico," in *The Bases of Empire: The Global Struggle Against U.S. Military Posts*, ed., Catherine Lutz (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 218-242; Carole Cohn, "Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals," *Signs* 12 (1987): 687-728; Adrian Parr, *Hijacking Sustainability* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009), 79-93.

¹⁸⁴ Air Force Real Property Agency, "The Former Kelly Air Force Base: Community Feedback Form," 2009, <http://www.afcec.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-070613-121.pdf> (Accessed June 9, 2014).

¹⁸⁵ "Port San Antonio Update," *Port San Antonio Newsletter*, October 2010, <http://www.portsanantonio.us/nl/oct10/oct10.html> (Accessed June 9, 2014).

¹⁸⁶ Debbie Aragon, "Campaign End but 'Everyday is Earth Day' Actions Continue," U.S. Air Force Civil Engineer Center, April 25, 2011, <http://www.afcec.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123320241> (Accessed June 9, 2014).

¹⁸⁷ "Building Futures: 2012 Year in Review," Port San Antonio, 2012, <http://www.portsanantonio.us/StoreImages/collateral/annual%20report2012.pdf> (Accessed June 9, 2014). See also, "Former Kelly Air Force Base, Bexar County, San Antonio, Texas (Closed 2001)," U.S. Air Force Civil Engineer Center, accessed from <http://www.afcec.af.mil/brac/kelly/>; "Kelly Cleanup: Air Force Committed to Kelly Cleanup," U.S. Air Force Civil Engineer Center, <http://www.afcec.af.mil/brac/kelly/cleanup/index.asp> (Accessed June 9, 2014).

¹⁸⁸ Eric Morgan, "Regional Communication and Sense of Place Surrounding the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant" in *Nuclear Legacies: Communication, Controversy, and the U.S. Nuclear Weapons Complex*, ed., Bryan Taylor, William Kinsella, Stephen Depoe, and Maribeth Metzler (New York: Lexington Books, 2007), 121-129; Andrew Ross, "The Future is a Risky Business," in *FutureNatural: Nature, Science Culture*, ed., George Robertson, Melinda Mash, Lisa Tickney, Jon Bird, Barry Curtis and Tim Putnam (New York: Routledge, 1996), 7-20. See also, Endres, "Sacred-Land or National Sacrifice Zone, 328-345; Catherine Lutz, "Introduction: Bases, Empire, and Global Response," in *The Bases of Empire: The Global Struggle Against U.S. Military Posts*, ed., Catherine Lutz (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 20-30; Woodward, *Military Geographies*, 38-72; Brenden E. Kendall, "Personae and Natural Capitalism: Negotiating Politics and Constituencies in a Rhetoric of Sustainability," *Environmental Communication* 2 (2008): 59-77; Depoe and Delicath, "Introduction," 9.

¹⁸⁹ "Port San Antonio Update," *Port San Antonio Newsletter*, September 2011, <http://www.portsanantonio.us/nl/10year/10thAnnivAug11.html> (Accessed June 9, 2014).

¹⁹⁰ "Port San Antonio Update," *Port San Antonio Newsletter*, September 2011, <http://www.portsanantonio.us/nl/10year/10thAnnivAug11.html> (Accessed June 9, 2014).

¹⁹¹ Bruce Miller, Port San Antonio Looks Forward to Journey Ahead," *MySanAntonio.com*, July 20, 2011, <http://www.mysanantonio.com/opinion/commentary/article/Port-San-Antonio-looks-forward-to-journey-ahead-1472367.php> (Accessed June 9, 2014).

¹⁹² "Proud Legacy, Strong Future: A Historic Timeline," Port San Antonio, July 13, 2011, <http://www.portsanantonio.us/StoreImages/collateral/timelines.pdf> (Accessed June 9, 2014).

¹⁹³ It is perhaps not surprising that after admitting to being partly responsible for contaminating surface aquifers, the Air Force offered 400 residents 1,300 dollars each in order to account for *property damages* (rather than health or safety concerns). Gregg Harman "DDT Sampling round Kelly to Continue after Federal Settlement," *San Antonio Current* August 23rd, 2010, accessed from <http://www2.sacurrent.com/blog/queblog.asp?perm=70510> (Accessed June 9, 2014).

¹⁹⁴ Kinsella, "Public Expertise: A Foundation," 83-95. See also, Kinsella and Mullen, "Becoming Hanford Downwinders," 93-95. See also, Louise Phillips, Anabela Carvalho, and Julie Doyle, ed., *Citizen Voices: Performing Public Participation in Science and Environmental Communication* (Chicago: Intellect/Bristol, 2012), 1-19; Endres, "Science and Public Participation," 49-75. See also the literature on "popular epidemiology": Fischer, *Citizens, Experts, and the Environment*, 151-157; Louise Phillips, Anabela Carvalho, and Julie Doyle, ed., *Citizen Voices*:

Performing Public Participation in Science and Environmental Communication (Chicago: Intellect/Bristol, 2012), 1-19.

¹⁹⁵ Nicole Foy, "Study of Kelly Toxins Criticized," *San Antonio Express*, January 26, 200, 1B.

¹⁹⁶ Katherine Squibb, "Review of ATSDR Petitioned Public Health Assessment, Kelly Air Force Base," Kelly Restoration Advisory Board, June 2002, 18-33, https://afarpaar.lackland.af.mil/ar/getdoc/KELLY/KELLY_AR_3278.pdfhttps://afarpaar.lackland.af.mil/ar/getdoc/KELLY/KELLY_AR_3278.pdf (Accessed June 9, 2014). The ATSDR is a notorious state agency charged with identifying potential toxic sites and monitoring their cleanup. In 2006, Congress released a scathing report that condemned the agency on the grounds that it "often obscures or overlooks potential health hazards, uses inadequate analysis, and fails to zero in on toxic culprits." See Subcommittee on Investigations and Oversight of the Committee on Science and Technology, "The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR): Problems in the Past, Potential for the Future?," U.S. House of Representatives, March 10, 2009, 28, <http://www.theinvestigativefund.org/files/managed/ATSDR%20Staff%20Report%2003%2010%2009.pdf> (Accessed June 9, 2014).

¹⁹⁷ Specifically, the Clearwater Revival Company concluded in a 2002 study that the Toxic Triangle exhibits alarming levels of beryllium. In 2006, epidemiologist Timothy Aldrich reported that many of the cancers in the Toxic Triangle could be directly attributed to the Kelly AFB's contamination of surface aquifers. Metro Health, however, never released Dr. Aldrich's assessment because, in the words of director Fernando Guerra, the report "wasn't jiving with what we already had from the state." In 2010, researchers working with the US Geological survey discovered elevated levels of the banned toxic herbicide DDT in nearby waterways. See Roddy Stinson, "More Evidence of Kelly AFB's Beryllium 'Legacy' Uncovered," *San Antonio Express*, September 14, 2002, 3A; Greg Schwartz, "Silenced Voices from the Toxic Triangle," *San Antonio Current*, April 13th, 2009, <http://www2.sacurrent.com/blog/queblog.asp?perm=69666> (Accessed June 9, 2014).

¹⁹⁸ Kelly Restoration Advisory Board transcript, October 9th, 2012, John F. Kennedy High School Auditorium, San Antonio Texas, <http://www.afcec.af.mil/shared/media/document/afd-121024-025.pdf>, 30-33 (Accessed June 9, 2014).

¹⁹⁹ George Rice, for example, recalls Kelly AFB's toxic legacy as a symptom of systemic disenfranchisement: "You know, I used to tell people if these contaminants were present in Myeloma Heights, those guys [cleanup personnel] would be on their knees with straws, sucking it out of the ground. You know, the fact that it happened in a poor community, a community that's more than 90 percent Hispanic has a lot to do with it." See "George Rice Interview, Part 1 of 2," conducted by David Todd, *Briscoe Center for American History* – University of Texas Austin, February 16, 2006, http://glifos.cah.utexas.edu/index.php?title=TexLegacyProj:Rice_george_2336&gsearch=Armando%20Quintanilla (Accessed June 9, 2014).

²⁰⁰ Southwest Workers Union, "Military Toxics Conference II: Converging Community Struggles in the Face of U.S. Military Contamination," San Antonio, Texas, July 14-16, 2005, 2, <http://www.swunion.org/EJ/Mil%20Tox/Military%20Toxics%20Conference%20II%20report.pdf> (Accessed June 9, 2014).

²⁰¹ Southwest Workers Union, "Military Toxics Conference," 2.

²⁰² By way of example, Cynthia Martinez and Ismael Guadalupe relayed stories of Puerto Ricans who were poisoned and sometimes killed as a result to the Air Force's negligent weapons testing procedures in Vieques; Vi Waghiyi of the Alaska Community Action of Toxics recollected the DOD's "invasion" of Alaska during the Cold War and its role in decimating ecosystems that were vital for indigenous communities' survival; and Ji-Seon Koh described memories of witnessing the effects of toxic exposure along the Korean demilitarized zone. Southwest Workers Union, "Military Toxics Conference," 5.

²⁰³ Southwest Workers Union, "Military Toxics Conference," 7.

²⁰⁴ Southwest Workers Union, "Military Toxics Conference," 3.

²⁰⁵ For a more sustained engagement on the political importance of metonyms *vis-à-vis* military violence, see chapter 2.

²⁰⁶ Diana Lopez, *Image of Contamination*, produced by Liz Gonzales and Antonio Rodriguez, San Antonio TX, Beyond Green: A listen Up!/Adobe Youth Voices Collaboration, 6:30-7:00.

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- ²⁰⁷ Erika Doss, *The Emotional Life of Contemporary Public Memorials: Towards a Theory of Temporary Memorials* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008), 11, 15.
- ²⁰⁸ Phaedra Pezzullo, "Performing Critical Interruptions: Stories, Rhetorical Invention, and the Environmental Justice Movement," *Western Journal of Communication* 65 (2001): 1-25.
- ²⁰⁹ Phil Brown, *Toxic Exposures: Contested Illnesses and the Environmental Health Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 79.
- ²¹⁰ In addition to the crosses, activists associated with the Southwest Workers Union such as Diana Lopez were able to convince the city to place signs around the nearby creeks, warning visitors of contamination. According to Lopez, "This is an accomplishment because not only will the signs help protect people, but they also mean that the city is acknowledging that there is a problem. They're acknowledging that pollution is going off Kelly Air force Base and affecting the community." Patricia Cogley, "Diana Lopez is Taking a Stand for the Earth," *Adobe Blog*, April 22, 2011, <http://blogs.adobe.com/conversations/2011/04/diana-lopez.html> (Accessed June 9, 2014).
- ²¹¹ Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).
- ²¹² Urlick Beck, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity* (London: Sage Publications, 1992), 3.
- ²¹³ Lauren Berlant, "Slow Death (Sovereignty, Obesity, Lateral Agency)," *Critical Inquiry* 33 (2007): 754-780.
- ²¹⁴ Magner, *A Trust Betrayed*, 265.
- ²¹⁵ Mike Magner, *A Trust Betrayed: The Untold Story of Camp Lejeune and the Poisoning of Generations of Marines and Their Families* (Boston, MA: Da Capo Press, 2014), 30. See also, Robert O'Down and Tim King, *Betrayal: Toxic Exposure of U.S. Marines, Murder and Government Cover-Up* (CreateSpace, on On-Demand Publishing LLC owned by Amazon.com, 2014).
- ²¹⁶ Magner, *A Trust Betrayed*, 31.
- ²¹⁷ In 1963, the Navy's Bureau of Medicine and Surgery issued a safety standard that required Public Works and Medical officers not only to assess the drinking water each year but also discontinue contaminated wells immediately. Unfortunately, there are no records that these tests were ever carried out at Camp Lejeune.
- ²¹⁸ William C. Neil, Jr., "TTHM Surveillance Report Form," (Water Sampling Report, *The Few The Proud The Forgotten* [website], October 20th, 1980), http://tftptf.com/CLW_Docs/CLW0436.pdf (Accessed June 9, 2014); William R. Levesque, "Camp Lejeune Water Contamination History Detailed in Documents," *Tampa Bay Times*, October 16, 2009, <http://www.tampabay.com/news/military/veterans/camp-lejeune-water-contamination-history-detailed-in-documents/1044542> (Accessed June 9, 2014).
- ²¹⁹ William C. Neil, Jr., "TTHM Surveillance Report Form," (Water Sampling Report, *The Few The Proud The Forgotten* [website], December 18th, 1980), http://tftptf.com/CLW_Docs/CLW0438.pdf.
- ²²⁰ William C. Neil, Jr., "TTHM Surveillance Report Form," (Water Sampling Report, *The Few The Proud The Forgotten* [website], February 26th, 1981), http://tftptf.com/CLW_Docs/CLW0443.pdf.
- ²²¹ Magner, *A Trust Betrayed*, 47.
- ²²² Bruce A. Babson, "Analyses of Samples 206 and 207 from Site Coded 'TT' and Samples 208 and 209 from Site Coded 'HP,'" (Water Sample Report, *The Few The Proud The Forgotten* [website], August 10th, 1982), http://tftptf.com/CLW_Docs/CLW0592.pdf; Hugh Putnam, "Initial Assessment Study of Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune North Carolina," Water and Air Research, INC. (Gainesville, Florida: April 1983), 2.2, http://tftptf.com/CLW_Docs/CLW0709_1.pdf.
- ²²³ Fred Hill, "Report of Investigation or Inspection of Water System," (Environmental Health Report, *The Few The Proud The Forgotten* [website], January 29th, 1985), <http://tftptf.com/images/StateNC29Jan85Investigation.pdf>
- ²²⁴ Quantities of TCE, for example, were found to be 320 times the federal limit. See Charles Wakild, "Notice of Violation," (Dept. of Natural Resources and Community Development Notice, *The Few The Proud The Forgotten* [website], May 15th, 1985), http://tftptf.com/CLW_Docs/CLW1200.pdf.
- ²²⁵ Magner, *A Trust Betrayed*, 81.
- ²²⁶ Magner, *A Trust Betrayed*, 87-90; A.P. Tokarz, "Leaking Underground Storage Tanks (UST); Gasoline Contamination in Hadnot Point Fuel Farm Area," (Memo Base Commanders, *The Few The Proud The Forgotten* [website], March 29th, 1989), <http://www.tftptf.com/CERCLA/00096.pdf>.
- ²²⁷ Magner, *A Trust Betrayed*, 87-90.

²²⁸ L.H. Beuhl, "Notice to Residents of Tarawa Terrace," (Residential Notice, *The Few The Proud The Forgotten* [website], April 30th, 1985), http://tftptf.com/CLW_Docs/CLW1191.pdf.

²²⁹ Arthur G. Linton, "Letter to LANTDIV," (EPA Notice, *The Few The Proud The Forgotten* [website], February 3rd, 1986), http://tftptf.com/CLW_Docs/CLW5430.pdf.

²³⁰ Richard F. Smith, EPA Considers Waste Cleanup at Marine Base," *The Daily News*, February 23rd, 1988, 1B.

²³¹ Dave Mundy, "DOD Program Plans to Identify, Assess, Clean Up Possible Contamination," *The Globe*, August 31st, 1989, 11A; Dave Mundy, "Measures Taken to Prevent Future Water Contamination," *The Globe*, September 14th, 1989, n/a.

²³² "Volatile Organic Compounds in Drinking Water and Adverse Pregnancy Outcomes: United States Marine Corps Base, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina," Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, August 1998, <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/HS/lejeune/index.html#TOC> (Accessed June 9, 2014).

²³³ Magner, *A Trust Betrayed*, 127.

²³⁴ In a 2007 panel hearing scheduled by the Oversight and Investigation Subcommittee, Major General Robert Dickerson Jr. blatantly lied when he asserted the following: "Full access to personnel, infrastructure, installations and requested documentation was granted to ATSDR from the start [and] in order to educate and communicate with family members and marines that they may have been exposed to the contaminated water, a robust communications campaign was initiated to encourage participation in the ATSDR surveys." Notwithstanding this deceptive historical account, a representative of the ATSDR who was also in attendance at the Congressional panel challenged Dickerson's attempt to contain Camp Lejeune's toxic past by reminding politicians that "there is no question that there are other folks at Camp Lejeune we're not studying who were exposed" and "we probably should be cautious about concluding that no cancers did occur". This ominous admission – though considerably understated – is important because it demonstrates that the ATSDR recognized not only that the earlier sample populations (e.g., babies who were born onsite) and methodologies (e.g., defining exposure only in terms of water consumption) yielded only limited conclusions but also that the conclusions in the 1997 report were likely wrong. See U.S. Congress, House, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, *Poisoned Patriots: Contaminated Drinking Water at Camp Lejeune*, 110th Cong., 1st sess., June 12th, 2007.

²³⁵ Water modelling – occasionally referred to as "historical reconstruction" – is a scientific method for estimating past levels of contamination. Water modelling helps researchers "reconstruct" the degrees of contamination within a past environment and then estimate the exposure pathways through which people may have encountered the carcinogens. See Morris L. Maslia et al., "Analyses of Groundwater Flow, Contaminant Fate and Transport, and Distribution of Drinking Water at Tarawa Terrace and Vicinity, U.S. Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina: Historical Reconstruction and Present-Day Conditions," Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, June 2009, Es11, http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/sites/lejeune/docs/TT_Executive_Summary_June142007_508.pdf (Accessed June 9, 2014).

²³⁶ Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* (New York: Verso, 2010).

²³⁷ On the concept of "disposability," see <http://historiesofviolence.com/>.

²³⁸ Magner, *A Trust Betrayed*, 200.

²³⁹ Magner, *A Trust Betrayed*, 202.

²⁴⁰ National Research Council of the National Academies, "Contaminated Water Supplies at Camp Lejeune: Assessing Potential Health Effects" (Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press, 2009), 2.

²⁴¹ For example, Christopher Portier, who was serving as the president of the ATSDR in 2010, claimed the following: "In terms of their finding that there is limited information relating TCE and PCE to disease, I simply need to look at the diseases of cancer and point out to them that virtually every national authority or international authority that has looked at TCE and PCE has labeled it 'reasonably anticipated to be a human carcinogen' or a 'probably human carcinogen.' And so the linkage there is extremely strong. There is no doubt in my mind that these are toxins that you do not want in your water The fact that the Hadnot Point WTP [water treatment plant] was substantially contaminated with PCE and TCE was well known to USMCB Camp Lejeune by May 1982; however the Base did not initiate sampling of raw and finished water at the Hadnot Point WTP until early December 1984." Quoted in Magner, *A Trust Betrayed*, 214.

²⁴² Magner, *A Trust Betrayed*, 206.

²⁴³ Magner, *A Trust Betrayed*, 207.

²⁴⁴ As evidenced by the testimonies featured in news articles, the diagnoses and subsequent treatment of breast cancer prompted the male veterans to renegotiate their own assumptions about gender and illness. For example, Peter Devereaux, a Marine Corps veteran stationed at Camp Lejeune, shared the following memory: "You go into all these pink buildings and places for your mammograms and appointments. You're this dude, and all these women are looking at you. I meet these women, and they're so much more open and honest and easy to talk to about emotions. Guys, all we talk about are football, eating, farting, and girls. So they really helped. I felt a burden lifted. I wanted to move forward. My goal now is to raise awareness."²⁴⁴ Another Marine Corps veteran stationed at Camp Lejeune, Bill Smith, remembers that his breast cancer treatment process taught him the following: "[Women] are so much stronger than men. I went to support groups, I listened to them. I've had the privilege of entering a women's world."

²⁴⁵ Specifically, the ATSDR released a 2013 survey of 12,598 children born at Camp Lejeune between 1968 and 1985, concluding that babies born to mothers who drank contaminated water while pregnant were four times more likely to develop severe illnesses such as leukemia. The ATSDR also conducted a mortality study in 2014 involving 155,000 Camp Lejeune veterans. In the report, the ATSDR concludes that a number of cancer-induced deaths at Camp Lejeune are markedly higher than the national average such as kidney cancer (35% higher), liver cancer (42% higher), Hodgkins lymphoma (47% higher), and multiple myeloma (68% higher). Although this 2014 study confirms that veterans stationed at Camp Lejeune are alarmingly likely die from a set of particular cancers, the study neither (1) establishes a casual relationship between exposure and bodily attrition nor (2) assess veterans and their families who have not yet died. At the time of this writing, Camp Lejeune veterans have called for more comprehensive studies, but the ATSDR claims that such a study is not feasible (due to a lack resources and information), a claim that should be met with suspicion given that the ATSDR's primary purpose is to conduct such studies. See Perri Zeitz Ruckart, et al., "Evaluation of Exposure to Contaminated Drinking Water and Specific Birth Defects and Childhood cancers at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina: A Case-Control Study," *Environmental Health* 12 (2013), 1-10, <http://www.ehjournal.net/content/pdf/1476-069X-12-104.pdf>; Frank J. Bove, et al., "Evaluation of Mortality among Marines and Navy Personnel Exposed to Contaminated Drinking Water at USMC Base Camp Lejeune: A Retrospective Cohort Study," *Environmental Health* 13 (2014), 1-14; Allison Lin, "Warning: Don't Drink the Water: An Examination of Appropriate Solutions for Veterans Exposed to Contaminated Water at Marine Base Camp Lejeune," *Veterans Law Review* 85 (2012), 85-130.

Chapter 4

“¿No Olvidado?: 21st-Century US military Violence and the Politics of Remembering Missing Migrants along US-Mexico Borderlands”

“The annihilation of bodies in the desert is never meant to be seen. When the system functions perfectly, corpses are drained of blood and viscera; bones dry, splinter, and blow away. When deterrence and erasure are fully achieved, the disappeared can be known or remembered only in stories, unsettling dreams, and outdated photos. Sometimes, though . . . scraps of the dead are rescued from oblivion.” – Jason De Leon²⁴⁶

On October 10th, 2012 José Antonio Elena Rodríguez, a 16-year-old Mexican national, was shot and killed on *Calle Internacional*, a street in Nogales, Mexico that runs parallel to an gigantic steel border wall. According to a report released by the US Border Patrol, agents were pursuing suspected “smugglers” earlier that night when they were allegedly “assaulted with rocks” being thrown at them from across the border wall. Agent Lonnie Swartz forced his gun through a four-inch gap between the beams of the wall and opened fire into Mexico. Elena Rodríguez, who was on his way to meet his brother at a nearby convenience store, was shot ten times, mostly in the head and back. In the years that followed, the US Border Patrol refused to speak publicly about the killing and denied several Freedom of Information Act requests for surveillance footage of the incident.²⁴⁷ The Border Patrol’s protocol of silence and secrecy is especially troubling given that the agency is directly responsible for shooting and killing at least 53 peoples along the border since 2005.²⁴⁸ Against the Border Patrol’s efforts to suppress the publicity of Elena Rodríguez’s death, family members and human rights allies on both sides of the border have built ephemeral memorials at the site of his death, plastered photographs of Elena Rodríguez directly onto the border wall, and staged several marches and vigils in his memory.²⁴⁹ In addition to assisting families’ and friends’ comprehension of the tragedy, these public acts of remembrance have also helped to circulate mournful ephemera that attest to the

increasingly precarious and lethal conditions of existence for Latino/a populations who inhabit aggressively militarized US-Mexico borderlands.²⁵⁰



Figure 8: Protest and Vigil for José Antonio Elena Rodríguez.
Photo Credit: Murphy Woodhouse/Personal Photograph (2012)
Permission provided by the photographer (see the Appendix)

Unfortunately, the killing of José Antonio Elena Rodríguez is not an isolated incident. His death is a symptom of the expansive and volatile mechanisms through which 21st-century US military violence and power routinely endangers the everyday lives and survival of documented and undocumented Latino/a populations.²⁵¹ Although the United States' anti-immigration military campaigns from the 19th and 20th centuries betray a persistent anxiety that porous US-Mexico borders pose economic, ideological, and criminal threats to the United States,²⁵² it was only at the dawn of the 21st century that the xenophobic fear of the "migrant threat" has been discursively funneled to energize US military violence and power within the context of the so-called "War on Terror."²⁵³ In a "National Security Directive" issued weeks after the September

11th, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, President George Bush declared that “[S]ome [migrants] come to the United States to commit terrorist acts, to raise funds for illegal terrorist activities, or to provide other support for terrorist operations, here and abroad.”²⁵⁴ The President’s executive order would prove decisive, as it helped to catalyze an historically entrenched national imaginary that envisions migrants – especially Latino/a migrants from the central and southern Americas – as “threats” against which the US military must defend the “American people.” In accordance with the 2001 PATRIOT ACT, the newly instituted Department of Homeland Security (DHS) absorbed Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) from the Department of Justice (DOJ) and then distributed astronomical financial and technological resources to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the Customs and Border Protection (CBP).²⁵⁵ In the years that followed, anti-immigration legislation proliferated on the state and federal level with the objective of emboldening border fortitude and enhancing “interior enforcement” of undocumented migrants through an increase in military personnel, surveillance technologies, and detention facilities.²⁵⁶ Between 2001 and 2012, for example, ICE agents doubled from 2,710 to 5,338 and Border Patrol personnel increased from approximately 10,000 agents to 27,000 agents (86% of whom are stationed along the southwestern border).²⁵⁷ By 2012, CBP military resources consisted of 270 aircrafts (e.g., armed helicopters, drones, a blimp), 280 maritime vessels, 26,000 armed vehicles, and thousands of mobile surveillance, radar, and thermal imaging technologies.²⁵⁸ During that same year, Congress spent 18 billion dollars on ICE’s and CBP’s immigration enforcement, a figure that exceeds the annual expenses of the FBI, DEA, and AFT combined.²⁵⁹

The accelerated growth and reach of the US military powerfully dictates the movements of Latina/o migrant populations throughout the entirety of the domestic landscape. For example, whereas the INS detained roughly 4,000 people per day in 1980 and approximately 5,500 in 1994, by 2001 the daily detainment of undocumented migrants increased to 20,000 each day and has reached over 30,000 in 2008.²⁶⁰ In 2007, roughly 276,000 people were deported from the United States whereas roughly 393,000 people were deported in 2009, 96% of which were from Central American countries and 72% were from Mexico in particular.²⁶¹ Between 2010 and 2012, the number of deportations increased from 400,000 to 430,000 annually.²⁶² In addition to exponential increases in detainment and deportation, there has also been a troubling spike in immigration-related deaths and human rights abuses. Whereas 24 migrants died crossing the border in 1994, *The New York Times* estimates that over ten times as many migrants have died traversing the Southwest deserts in the 21st century.²⁶³ Ultimately, “the border” serves as central battleground in America’s war against terrorism, given that the United States invested vast military resources toward monitoring, detaining, deporting, and in some cases, killing Latino/a (un)documented migrants throughout the margins and interior of the domestic landscape. Ironically, as of 2016 there has been no documented case of a Latino/a migrant seeking entry in the United States in order to exact any sort of terrorist plot.²⁶⁴

Notably, “the border” is not only a geographically inert, militarized territory explicitly designed to keep Latino/a migrant populations out of the United States. Within the context of a post-9/11 American war culture, “the border” also operates as a rhetorical weapon through which the state invites the citizenry to imagine Latino/a migrants as terrorist threats to national security, thereby reenergizing anti-immigrant attitudes in support of an intensive US military

strategy. Rhetorical borders, according to Robert DeChaine, are “bounding, ordering apparatuses, whose primary function is to designate, produce, and/or regulate the space of difference.”²⁶⁵ Similarly, Anne Teresa Demo argues that rhetorical borders operate as nationalistic idioms that produce particular conceptions of national identity through which systems of inclusion and exclusion are rationalized and enforced.²⁶⁶ When wielded in the service of 21st-century US military violence and power, rhetorical borders function as lethal technologies of biopower that constitute not only who is and is not codified as American. It also defines who is and who is not targeted for militarized, anti-immigration violence. Writes Raka Shome:

The immigrant body, caught in the web of relations, becomes a body that is either always ‘on the move’ – dodging gun fire and car patrols, helicopters, and canine teams – or so forcibly fixed (usually when apprehended) that it cannot move . . . The border is where the bounds and contests over nationhood are negotiated, where ‘belongingness’ is established or denied, and the performance of xenophobic belongingness demands that public spaces for immigrants be shrunk and even denied.²⁶⁷

Within this post-9/11 discursive economy of anti-immigration, fear, and terrorism, “border security” reemerges as an invigorated technique of military defense, borderlands resurface as pivotal battlegrounds in the “War on Terror,” and (un)documented Latino/a migrants materialize as unpredictable but all-the-more immanent terrorist threats to the “American way of life.” Consequently, the removal of the Latino/a migrant body operates metonymically as the enhancement of border securitization, as evidence of a strong and secure national body, and as proof that militarization is working.

In this chapter, I argue that a strategically crafted exercise in public forgetting serves as one of the US military’s most powerful weapons with which to impose physical, mobile, and

rhetorical borders against Latino/a migrants and the borderlands they inhabit.²⁶⁸ According to

Claudia Aburdo Guzman,

[The borderlands] are a place where each subsequent group has appropriated the previous group's culture, modified it, and added its own idiosyncrasies. Each cultural mutation has showcased the dominant dwellers' system of values, thrusting the previous system into "history" As a result, the understanding of borderlands, this 'unique' intermingling of cultures, rests on a process of erasure, denial, and distortion.²⁶⁹

Indeed, the US-Mexico border is a "palimpsest," at least insofar as the United States must persistently write over and erase the aggressive exercises in military violence and power that govern the landscape.²⁷⁰ Given the mounting histories of violence exacted on migrant bodies by the US military, the state must govern the rhetorical norms through which such histories can be publicized and remembered. For example, in the years following the killing of Elena Rodríguez, the US Border Patrol systematically regulated and suppressed the circulation of information regarding the circumstances of the boy's death. The US Border Patrol did not simply keep silent. Officials also repeatedly declared that the agent who shot Elena Rodríguez ten times in the back and head was "defending" himself from an "assault of rocks" by "smugglers."²⁷¹ In effect, the US Border Patrol invoked Elena Rodríguez's memory alongside metaphors of criminality and danger in order to make the Border Patrol's killing of a Mexican national *in Mexico* seem justifiable. Put differently, the US Border Patrol intended to circumscribe the field of public discourses so as to foreclose dissident memories of Elena Rodríguez's killing that could potentially galvanize public discourses against the US military apparatus that harms and kills Latino/a populations living within US-Mexico borderlands.

This chapter is not only about those statist discourses that systematically distort histories of US military violence and power within post-9/11 US-Mexico borderlands. In spite of

these state-sanctioned border rhetorics, communities and organizations have nonetheless produced compelling commemorative tactics geared toward mobilizing public opinion and sentiment against the US military's aggressive targeting of Latino/a migrant bodies.²⁷² For example, Elena Rodríguez's friends and family memorialized the killing as evidence of the US Border Patrol's history of reckless use of lethal force against Latinos/as.²⁷³ Although the campaign began modestly – consisting of small vigils and temporary memorials – it eventually garnered enough support from human rights organizations and state officials that US Border Patrol agent Swartz was eventually arraigned on charges for the murder of Elena Rodríguez. Of course, the arraignment of Lonnie Swartz is not a sufficient resolution to the exigencies of migrant suffering and death at the hands of the US military. My point in invoking the memorialization of Elena Rodríguez is to highlight that dissident commemorative practices can enable audiences and organizations to challenge the perpetuation of US military violence and power along the US-Mexico Border.

In the pages that follow, I argue that America's 21st-century war on terrorism is waged in part against the memories of (un)documented Latino/a migrants who suffered and, in some cases, died as a result of the ongoing militarization of the borderlands between the United States and Mexico. The primary question driving this analysis is: How do official and vernacular memory practices involving histories of 21st-century military violence within US-Mexico borderlands fortify as well as dismantle the rhetorical and material formations of "the border"? I explore this question by attending to two primary commemorative forms through which memories of Latino/a migrants circulate: (1) the institutional policies and forensic rhetorics through which migrant corpses are handled within the United States; and (2) the ephemera

abandoned by undocumented migrants in the Southwest deserts. It is particularly important to attend to these commemorative forms, because they serve as two of the most popular rhetorical loci through which histories of 21st-century US military violence and power against Latino/a migrant bodies are forged. By examining the public circulation of migrant corpses and migrant ephemera, I argue that these technological and material memory practices enable military institutions to forget the differential application of US military violence onto Latinos/as migrant bodies. Moreover, they also serve as vital avenues through which organizations and communities craft dissident memories that challenge the perpetuation of state-sanctioned suffering and death against migrant bodies within US-Mexico borderlands. I conclude by assessing whether or not it is possible to salvage migrant archives in the face of such amnestic forces.²⁷⁴

The Technological (Dis)Aggregation of Migrant Bodies:

“What they [the bereaved] have already endured is terrifying. You cannot grieve without a body – without certainty that the person is gone. Every single day that you are living a normal life, you know they could be suffering.” – Robin Reineke²⁷⁵

In crossing US-Mexico borderlands, migrants’ bodies are mired by the corrosive physicality of the southwestern deserts. The harsh weather and terrain of the borderlands quickly disfigures migrants’ bodies, and exposure to blistering heat, flash floods, and scavenging animals often render corpses unrecognizable. These deserts are so lethal, in fact, that the United States explicitly implemented a “deterrence strategy” in the 1990s that strategically leveraged the ecological conditions of the US-Mexico borderlands as a natural bulwark against the flow of undocumented migration.²⁷⁶ However, rather than deterring undocumented migration, the policy simply re-routed migration into more dangerous and lethal landscapes.

Moreover, if a migrant dies in route through these landscapes, the corpse's individuating physical characteristics (e.g., tattoos, scars) and possessions (e.g., driver's licenses, letters, photographs) wither away, leaving scant human remains that are difficult to recover and identify. Therefore, even if the US military's strategy to leverage the ecology of the borderlands as a deterrent failed, it nonetheless succeeded at making migrants' corpses – and the histories they represent – virtually undetectable.

In the unlikely chance that a migrant's body is recovered, it is then subjected to a range of ill-conceived institutional practices that enable the state to attribute anonymity to the corpse and strip it from its past. For example, rather than establishing a standardized, nationwide database for documenting missing persons and recording bodily remains – one that would assist coroners' offices, law enforcement agencies, and families of missing persons to exchange information – the posthumous lives of migrant bodies are routinely distributed to forensic specialists at the local medical examiner's office. These specialists are charged with determining the identities of the dead, storing bodily remains, and notifying the bereaved, despite inadequate financial and technological resources. In order to make room for the ever-growing accumulation of migrant corpses, some offices will incinerate and discard bodies before taking DNA samples, thereby eliminating the last hope for identifying the dead.²⁷⁷ Due to such systemic failure, the ACLU estimates that 25% of the corpses *that are discovered* within US-Mexico borderlands remain unidentified.²⁷⁸ Rather than preserving and identifying migrants' bodies, these institutional practices make migrants' bodies go missing, even against families' and friends' best efforts to assist the US agencies responsible for recording the remains of undocumented corpses.²⁷⁹ David Cruz, for example, provides a troubling account of

his attempt to navigate these institutional policies so as to obtain the remains of his twin brother, Alberto Cruz, who died from exhaustion while crossing the deserts between the US and Mexico.²⁸⁰ After two men who migrated with Alberto notified David of his brother's demise, David sought help from five immigration centers, a consulate in Coronado, and the San Diego police, all of whom either ignored his phone calls or simply refused to help. David even asked the US Border Patrol to search some of the possible coordinates where his brother's corpse may reside, but the US Border Patrol gave up the search after only two days. Finally, David contacted forensics specialists at a local medical examiner's office who told David that they cannot verify whether or not the bodily remains they possess belong to his brother. Of his experiences, David Cruz writes:

I am also pained, because the authorities did not respond. As authorities, they could have mobilized many government offices. I tried looking for help in many places and no one gave us the opportunity or any concrete results. They did not even return my calls, especially the consulate. Aren't they the ones that are supposed to represent us? I think that for them it is only a matter to be dealt with behind their desks. That is wrong: we are human beings. There should be more help . . . There is no place we can go to. I am a resident [of the United States] and I can move freely, but what about those who can't?²⁸¹

David's is only one story of the vast institutional obstacles that hinder families and friends from recovering the remains of their loved ones, acquiring information about the circumstances of their deaths, or even simply verifying that the person is dead. What these institutional policies ensure is that migrants' corpses – and the stories they could tell – are decidedly, but nonetheless irresolutely, gone. At some facilities, the coroner's office will eventually cremate a migrant's corpse and then inter it into a pauper's grave, one that identifies the dead as either "Jane Doe" and "John Doe" (as in the case of the Pima County Cemetery and Holtville's Terrace Park Cemetery) or "Unknown Female" and "Unknown Male" (as in the case of the Sacred Heart

Cemetery). Therefore, if migrants' corpses have not been corroded by the ecological conditions of the desert or lost within a poorly managed, bureaucratic system, then they're often displaced into anonymous graveyards on the outskirts of town. In doing so, US government agencies consign migrants' bodies to a plot of land where a miscellany of unnamed and past-less bodies remain. Marta Iraheta, whose nephew died crossing the US-Mexico border, narrates the painful uncertainty and lack of closure that animates grieving the loss of a loved one at these graveyards:

As I said, there [in South Texas] they have a cemetery where they bury those who supposedly do not have anyone to reclaim them. But it is not that the families don't reclaim them because they don't love them. It is that they don't even know that they are there. And sometimes they just put a little aluminum plaque where they fall down. And they say that when they cut the grass, they throw the plaques away. That means, they do not know they are [buried].²⁸²

As both David's and Marta's troubling accounts evidence, US government agencies play a central role in obstructing the recovery of migrants' bodies as well as the stories of their deaths.²⁸³ Consequently, the United States erases histories of migrant suffering within the US-Mexico borderlands, and the US military retains a geopolitical position of unaccountability to the migrant populations it subjects to contemporary conditions of military violence and power.²⁸⁴



Figure 9: Anonymous Migrant Graves at Holtville Terrace Park Cemetery.

Photo Credit: Consuelo Crow/Personal Photograph (2010)

Permission provided by the photography (see the Appendix)

In order to assign an “unidentifiable” status to migrants’ viscera – and therefore set into motion a lacuna of public recognition of migrant suffering *vis-à-vis* the US military apparatus – the state must persistently discount the evidentiary value of the migrant’s bodily remains and dismiss the histories to which they might attest. However, if – as Thomas Keenan suggests – corpses and bodily remains “have left behind something to be read,” then “they are mute witnesses . . . [that] need interpreters, translators, if they are persuasively to demonstrate anything.”²⁸⁵ Therefore, even if migrants are dead their histories are not simply gone. Bodily remains always have the potential to resurface in the wake of new evidence and stories which can, in turn, engender public forums for dispute and debate where more than one interpreter can lay claim to what stories the remains portend.²⁸⁶ The institutional policies to incinerate the remains of migrants’ bodies and consign them to pauper’s graves render those bodily remains

voiceless and preemptively foreclose any possibility of the remains declaring a name and a history.²⁸⁷

In spite of the state's efforts, numerous individuals and organizations have made considerable efforts to revive the stories of migrants' corpses. These individuals and organizations exercise the rhetorical maneuver of *prosopopoeia* – i.e., the trope of giving voice to inanimate objects – in an effort to recover bodily remains from the depths of state amnesia and reconnect the dead migrant to a name, to a family, and to broader histories of state-sanctioned military violence against Latino/a migrants.²⁸⁸ For example, the “Pima County Missing Migrant Project” – an organization managed by Humane Borders as well as the Pima County Medical Examiner's Office – developed the “Arizona OpenGIS Initiative for Deceased Migrants,” a regional database that offers stakeholders access to data involving over 2,100 migrants who died in the Sonora desert since 2006.²⁸⁹ The data consists of information gathered from families, foreign consulates, humanitarian groups (e.g., Border Angels), and law enforcement. In collecting this data and organizing it in easy-to-use interactive infographics, the Pima County Missing Migrant Project serves as a necessary testament to the histories of migrant deaths along the US-Mexico border. Recently, Robin Reineke – a cultural anthropologist who launched the database as part of the Colibri Center for Human Rights – recently persuaded the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (“NamUS”) to incorporate information about missing migrants from the Sonora corridor.²⁹⁰ In aggregating information of the locations of migrants' deaths and then publicizing the information in an accessible visual database, the Pima County Missing Migrant Project effectively breaches the state-sanctioned lacunae of migrant suffering and death along the borderlands. Specifically,

the database functions as a map of the histories of violence against migrant bodies insofar as it illustrates the lethal passages through which the US military border apparatus has forced migrants to cross, endure, and occasionally survive.²⁹¹ Furthermore, the database serves a personal function as well as political one. First, these bodies must be identified not only to acknowledge that an aggressively militarized border apparatus obliquely targets, injures, and kills migrant populations. Second, it relays the loss of life to loved ones. Writes Reineke:

[Immigrants and their families] are excluded from the technologies and systems that have been designed to address the basic human right to know what happened to a missing loved one . . . The suffering of the families of the missing is a call not only to identify the dead but to recognize that these people too are lives, missed and irreplaceable.²⁹²

In effect, it is imperative to develop databases and archives that can preserve information about missing migrants and their corpses, because it not only facilitates the mourning processes for the deceased's loved ones, but also acknowledges that migrants are grievable lives worthy of remembrance.

By disrupting the state-sanctioned institutional policies that make migrant bodies go missing, the Pima County Missing Migrant Project reproduces and circulates evidence of migrant suffering that could spurn a public recognition and commemorative discourse involving the lethal consequences of a militarily energized anti-immigration border campaign. Indeed, what the database enables is a necessary precondition for public memory that anonymizing migrant deaths cannot allow. Take, for example, the case of a 29-year-old man whose corpse was discovered by the US Border Patrol in Sonoran Desert on August 3rd, 2010. The body was fully clothed, but the corpse contained no evidence of an identity, save only a large tattoo across his chest that read "Dayani Cristal." The Border Patrol transported the corpse to the

Pima County Medical Examiner's Office where forensics specialists and an officer for the Mexican consulate examined the body for any clue of the corpse's identity. The forensic specialists took photographs, stored the clothing in a closet, and placed the corpse in the county morgue alongside hundreds of other anonymous corpses, where it remained identified only as a case number. Once the case reached the Pima County Missing Migrant Project, coordinators began checking missing persons databases scattered throughout the state, and they eventually retrieved deportation documents from the US Border Patrol about a Honduran man that fit the description. However, the man who bore the tattoo "Dayani Cristal" used a pseudonym on the day of his arrest so that he could protect his identity from the US government, just in case he attempted to cross the border again. The Pima County Missing Migrant Project contacted the Honduran consulate and the Honduran Foreign Affairs Office publicized the case in the local paper, along with dozens of other cases. Eventually, someone recognized the tattoo, and contacted the family of the deceased. The name of the 29-year-old dead migrant who was discovered with the words "Dayani Cristal" tattooed on his chest was returned to his family in Honduras. His name was Dilcy Yohan Sandres Martinez, and "Dayani Cristal" is the name of his daughter. Once Dilcy's body was returned to Honduras, his family held a funeral attended by hundreds of his boyhood friends and neighbors.²⁹³

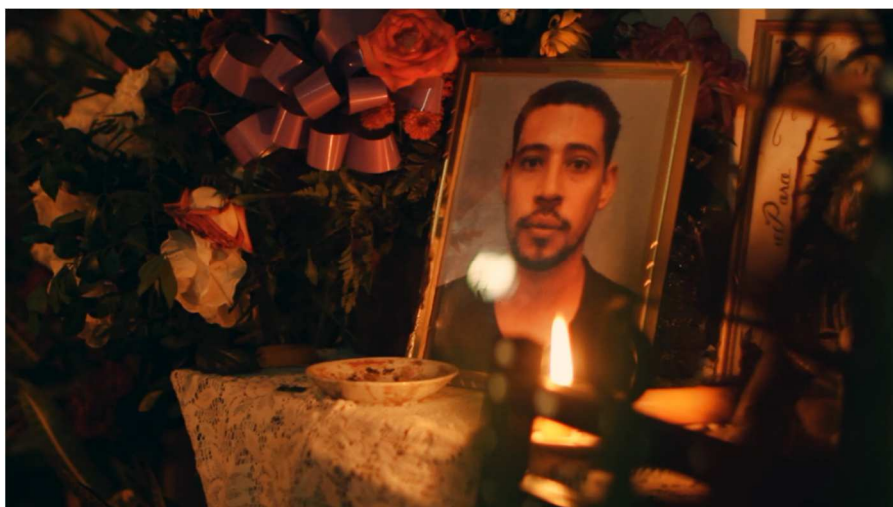


Figure 10: Temporary Memorial for Dilcy Yohan Sandres Martinez.
 Photo Credit: *Who is Dayani Cristal?*/Pulse (2014)
 Screenshot from the film.

The identification and burial of Dilcy is not a “happy ending,” of course. He died in an effort to find a job that could allow him to support the family he left behind. And now he’s dead, and there’s nothing that his daughter or his wife or anyone else who loved him can do about it. However, what the history of Dilcy’s death and posthumous life illustrates is the vital importance of the Pima County Missing Migrant Project, and the forensic protocols and records keeping system that the organization uses to return anonymized migrant corpses to the world of the living, albeit as a memory of a specific life lost crossing the perilous US-Mexico border. Still, to retrieve the remains of a loved one is not an insignificant act. According to Dilcy’s mother, “God may have taken him, but he didn’t want me to be alone. Although he is dead, he is here with me. I can bring him flowers whenever I want. Other mothers are still waiting for their sons, but maybe they’re not alive anymore.”²⁹⁴ In learning of her son’s death and then retrieving his body, Dilcy’s mother could begin the painful process of grieving and memorializing her son. Other families and friends of dead migrants, however, are not afforded the same possibility. In many cases, when a loved one inexplicably vanishes – with no sign of

life or death – the bereaved can find themselves encumbered by an impasse, one that obstructs processes acknowledging the death of loved one and remembering their past. The memory of the dead is stunted when the life and body of the dead simply goes missing and disappears. What the Pima County Missing Migrant Project strives to gather, therefore, are fragments – both material and rhetorical – of a migrant’s past that has been made missing by a system of corrosive institutional policies. The organization enacts a “counter-forensics” of migrants’ corpses, which Allen Sekula defines as “the exhumation and identification of the *anonymized* (‘disappeared’) bodies of the oppressor state’s victims” which, through particular forensic practices, “becomes the key to a process of political resistance and mourning.”²⁹⁵ Ultimately, in recovering the physical fragments of a migrant’s corpse and then attaching discursive fragments (e.g., names, stories) to the inanimate viscera, the Missing Migrant Project provides a posthumous voice to dead migrants, one that beckons personal mourning rituals as well as memorializes histories of US military violence and power against undocumented Latino/a bodies.

The Things They Carried: The Ephemera of Migrant Memory

Despite the state-sanctioned anonymization of migrant corpses, the memories of Latino/a migrants nonetheless haunt US public culture. One manifestation of the spectral-like qualities of migrant memory involves the public attention paid to the ephemera abandoned by migrants as they cross the US-Mexico border. Some materials serve a functional purpose (e.g., water jugs, empty cans of food, backpacks, some money) whereas others may share a more intimate relationship to the owner (e.g., personal letters or diaries, photographs of family

members, rosaries, telephone numbers). These materials either assist migrants' chances of survival or possess personal significance to the migrant's sense of self. Although



Figure 11: Migrant Materials Abandoned along the US-Mexico Border.
Photo Credit: Border Angels/Personal Photograph
Permissions provided by the photographer (see the Appendix)

these materials can be found scattered across the deserts between the United States and Mexico, discourses involving these materials have become a powerful trope within popular (anti-)immigration rhetoric. This rhetoric poignantly illustrates the role that remembering and forgetting migrant suffering plays in exacerbating or challenging contemporary conditions of US military violence and power.

Within the rhetorical gambit of the US Border Patrol, military violence and power does not target undocumented migrants as much as the “border trash” that migrants leave behind.²⁹⁶ Camouflaged under a rhetoric of environmental sustainability, national security and border fortitude are conflated with environmental protection, and the detainment and deportation of migrants is coded as “cleaning up the trash.” One particularly egregious example involves Arizona’s Bureau of Land Management (BLM), which recently rationalized a militarized campaign against undocumented migrations (i.e., “Operation ROAM”) as an environmental principle. In a 2013 annual report, the BLM claimed the following:

Border-related migration creates adverse impacts to the natural and cultural landscape, fragments wildlife habitat, damages archaeological and sacred sites, causes erosion, and increases the presence of invasive plant species . . . [T]he effects of these efforts continue to be reversed as trash is removed, and unauthorized trails and roads are restored to their natural state and replanted with native species. In order to restore closed routes to as near a natural condition as possible, the BLM work crews de-compacted the routes through raking or scoring with a disk or harrow pulled by an all-terrain vehicle. Youth crews then raked and applied “vertical mulching” techniques, which includes placing boulders, dead and down vegetation, and even planting some live vegetation such as cholla cactus within the disturbed soils of affected routes or roadbeds. Only vegetation, rock, and wood materials native to the immediate closed route vicinities were used . . . Twenty-seven miles of road and trail were reclaimed and six miles of vehicle barriers were erected.²⁹⁷

Although such a rhetoric seems to indicate an environmentally conscious government initiative that “restores” the borderlands to its “natural state,” such an operation ultimately works as an insidiously disguised mode of military violence that aggressively compromises migrants’ likelihood of survival. For example, to “reverse” environmental damage by removing “unauthorized trails” is not simply a process of remediating natural landscapes. Instead, it is also a tactical military operation that eliminates migrant trails, and installs obstacles designed to interfere with migrants’ movements, thereby exposing them to more lethal environmental

and juridical mechanisms. The BLM also celebrates its role in removing vehicles that migrants need in order to safely cross the desert. For the BLM, the removal of migrants' vehicles mitigates "the possibility for fuel and fluid leaks, vandalism, fire, hazardous material deposits, and further trash and damage associated with abandoned vehicles."²⁹⁸ Be that as it may, these vehicles are not simply "abandoned." Instead, vehicles are often placed in the desert deliberately, as a landmark to assist migrants' navigation through the desert or as a means of transportation. These cars are not so much "abandoned" as they are seized by a US military agency. The troubling irony of organizations such as the BLM is that their military operations are disguised as environmental initiatives, despite the corrosive consequences that the operations have on the environments they're sworn to fortify. For example, the BLM's "Interstate 8 Vegetation Reduction Project (Project Daylight)" systematically destroys vegetation near desert highways in order to "limit the availability of places of concealment" and "enhance the ability of law enforcement agencies to suppress criminal activity along I-8."²⁹⁹ In so doing, the US Border Patrol increases its depth of surveillance across the borderlands, even as the act of destroying vegetation, eroding the soil around migration passageways, and installing barriers throughout the landscape significantly compromises the ecological vitality of the borderlands.³⁰⁰ Ultimately, the rhetoric of environmental protection serves an insidious amnesic function. It rationalizes military violence as a sustainable practice while forgetting the role that such military policies play in harming and even killing people trying to cross the US-Mexico border.³⁰¹

What is imperative to recognize here is that the BLM and the Border Patrol conduct greenwashed military campaigns on the assumption that these Latino/a migrants have not yet

threatened the United States but that they *will have caused* some sort of threat in some seemingly inevitable future. According to this preemptive logic – which has been the most powerful security doctrine in the United States since 2001³⁰² – the BLM and the Border Patrol assemble “evidence” of a possible threat that has not yet taken place (i.e., environmental disrepair, criminal activity, terrorism). The threat does not, in fact, exist even as it is invoked by US military organizations in order to justify and exact state violence against Latino/a migrant populations.³⁰³ In other words, the “migrant threat” along the US-Mexico border is not an historically verifiable phenomenon as much as a state-sanctioned rhetorical invention that “remembers” borderlands and the Latino/a populations who inhabit them as vehicles through which past and future terrorist attacks (*will*) *have* occurred. In producing “memories for what has not been actually lived,” the “migrant threat” operates as a political mode of “mnemonic control” that rationalizes the accelerations of military violence and power at the border.³⁰⁴

Against the popular impulse to sanitize histories of state-sanctioned military violence according to a future perfect idiom of environmental protection, artists and archeologists have begun studying and publicizing the materials abandoned along the US-Mexico border as evidence of the changing historical conditions of US military violence. For example, archeologist Jason De Leon retrieved migrants’ possessions from the US-Mexico borderlands and – with the help of curator Amanda Krugliak and photographer Richard Barnes – designed an exhibit titled “State of Exception,” which showcased the possessions throughout the United States.³⁰⁵ The exhibit consists, in part, of images of migrant materials (e.g., black water jugs, dilapidated shoes) as well as a wall of roughly fifty backpacks used by migrants to contain their belongings.



Figure 12: "State of Exception."
 Photo Credit: Richard Barnes (2012)
 Permission provided by the photographer and curators (see the Appendix)

For the curators, these “seemingly mundane things left in the desert are key to understanding the routinized and widespread forms of suffering that many border crossers experience.”³⁰⁶ De Leon specifically argues that migrants began using black water jugs in order to be less visible when crossing the border at night. Although such a tactic of concealment is ineffective given the US military’s surveillance and imaging technology, the heightened usage of such a tactic nonetheless illustrates those emergent practices used by migrants in order to address the changing historical conditions of US military violence and power. Even backpacks signal similar historical changes, as it has only been in the last few decades that Latino/a migrants – especially Mexicans – needed to pack and prepare for a crossing that could take several days to complete.³⁰⁷ Although “State of Exception” does not try to depict individual migrant experiences, the display of these ordinary waste objects deflects the greenwashing

amnesia of military and state agencies in favor of a more “sociological” framework that highlights the changing historical conditions of migrants’ passage. If “State of Exception” circulates the contemporary materials of migrant crossings as evidence of changing historical conditions of migrants’ experience, then these ephemera serve as commemorative residues of the routine modes of corporeal attrition and systemic violence that are particular to the 21st century’s militarized borderlands.³⁰⁸

Tentative Conclusions: Toward an Archive of Migrant Suffering?

This chapter sought to delineate the complex networks of 21st-century US military violence and power, anti-immigration policies, state-sanctioned memory practices, and the efforts by organizations and communities to publicize particular histories of migrant suffering within the US-Mexico borderlands.³⁰⁹ Within the post-9/11 US zeitgeist, migrant corpses confront a system of US governmental policies that explicitly make the body as well as the memory of dead migrants go missing. Poor records keeping practices, the destruction of bodily remains and DNA, as well as the burial of corpses in paupers’ graves produces state-sanctioned lacunae over the histories of US military violence and power against Latino/a migrant bodies. Such lacunae are exacerbated by the rhetoric of environmental protection deployed by the US Border Patrol and the BLM. The BLM’s greenwashing of “Operation ROAM” conceals US agencies’ strategic reterritorialization of the borderlands in the service of compromising migrants’ survival. More than just rationalizing the obstruction of the passageways through which migrants navigate the US-Mexico border, this rhetorical strategy produces a memory of migrants posing a vaguely defined future threat. Against these state-sanctioned amnestic practices, organizations such as the Pima County Missing Migrant Project created an

international database and documentation system that attempts to aggregate the contemporary histories of Latino/a migrant deaths within the borderlands. Moreover, it also attributes names and histories to migrant corpses in hopes of returning the dead to the bereaved. Such a practice is significant, because it assembles corporeal and rhetorical fragments with which communities can grieve the loss of a loved one as well as craft dissident memories of the US military's assault on Latino/a migrants. Similarly, the archeologists and curators who built "State of Exception" recovered migrant ephemera in order to provide a compelling display of Latino/a migrants' contemporary struggles to navigate and survive the increasingly war-torn landscapes between the United States and Mexico. In juxtaposing these struggles over the histories of migrant suffering along the US-Mexico border, this project maps the ordinary challenges faced by (un)documented migrants to remember and memorialize those bodies and landscapes that have been torn asunder by contemporary junctures of US military violence and power.

What the Pima County Missing Migrant Project as well as the "State of Exception" exhibit produce is an archive that attests to the histories of Latino/a migrants enduring and dying within the war-torn landscapes of the US-Mexico borderlands. Such an archive is vital, because US government agencies eviscerate any trace of an archive of migrant suffering (through the mishandling of migrant corpses) or they produce discursive archives of "evidence" that frame contemporary Latino/a migration as an unequivocal threat (e.g., environmental, terroristic) to the American way of life. Assembling a migrant archive that challenges these "official" memories is therefore vital, because – in the words of Arjun Appadurai – migrant archives engender a "material site of the collective will to remember," which can embolden

migrants' capacities to "aspire" and imagine worlds beyond the neocolonial conditions that endanger their lives.³¹⁰ "Operating outside the official spheres," writes Appadurai, "the migrant archive cannot afford the illusion that traces are accidents, that documents arrive on their own, and that archives are repositories of the luck of material survival. Rather, the migrant archive is a continuous and conscious work of the imagination, seeking in collective memory an ethical basis for the sustainable reproduction of cultural identities."³¹¹ A migrant archive – at least as Appadurai imagines it – provides the cultural resources with which migrant populations can aspire against the junctures of imperialistic violence that make their histories go missing. As José Esteban Muñoz reminds us, the circulation of migrant memories "grants entrance and access to those who have been locked out of official histories and, for that matter, 'material reality.'"³¹² If the US military leverages public amnesia as an assault on migrants' futures, then gathering and circulating physical and rhetorical materials within US public culture inserts Latino/a migrants' histories in the national vernacular. In this regard, the Pima County Missing Migrant Project and "State of Exception" assemble material and rhetorical fragments in an attempt to carve out a memorial space where undocumented Latino/a migrants can be remembered beyond the institutional and discursive mechanisms of an anti-immigration, amnestic US military apparatus.

Still, although the Pima County Missing Migrant Project and "State of Exception" enacted a significant intervention in the state-sanctioned lacunae of migrant suffering, there are severe political and cultural limits animating the redemptive qualities of their respective archives. One of the most glaring commonalities across these archives is that they are produced and administered by individuals who possess considerable political and cultural

privileges, especially in terms of their citizenship statuses. To put it bluntly, none of the archives analyzed here are authored by undocumented migrants themselves. Although the forensics specialists, coordinators, and curators who created these archives lend a degree of recognition to undocumented Latino/a migrants by leveraging their education and legal privileges, the extent to which migrant populations participate in the production of these archives is alarmingly marginal, at best. To emphasize that the direct involvement of undocumented Latino/a migrants is in large measure absent from these archives is not to discount the important political, cultural, and personal work that they accomplish. However, this marginalization does highlight that Latino/a migrant archives assembled by Latino/a migrants continue to achieve scant circulation and recognition within a broader US public culture. To conclude that there remains a systemic concealment of migrant archives involving the histories of 21st-century US military violence and power is undoubtedly a byproduct of the methodology and case studies supporting this project. Still, this conclusion also demonstrates the power of particular US government agencies in regulating the public circulation and remembrance of undocumented Latino/a migrant suffering within the US-Mexico borderlands. Indeed, even as the Missing Migrant Project and “State of Exception” carve out a space for migrant archives to circulate with a higher degree of intelligibility, the United States – with its aggressive system of detection, detainment, and deportation– continues to succeed in stymying a wider circulation of (un)documented migrant memory practices and archives. It is critical, therefore, that careful attention be paid to the dissident practices through which migrants struggle to survive, as these practices continue to confront junctures of military violence and

power that make such histories of struggle and survival go missing from the public record.

Notes

²⁴⁶ Jason De Leon, *The Land of Open Graves: Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015), 253.

²⁴⁷ Bob Ortega, "Name of Border Agent Who Shot Teen Released by Judge," *AZCentral*, November 13, 2014, <http://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/arizona/2014/11/13/border-agent-shot-teen-name-released/18993997/> (Accessed on November 13, 2014).

²⁴⁸ Bob Ortego and Rob O'Dell, "Deadly Border Agent Incidents Cloaked in Silence: Republic Investigation Finds Little Public Accountability in Southwest Border Killings," *The Arizona Republic*, December 13, 2013, <http://www.azcentral.com/news/politics/articles/20131212arizona-border-patrol-deadly-force-investigation.html> (Accessed on September 12, 2013).

²⁴⁹ Murphy Woodhouse, "Remembering Jose Antonio: Day of the Dead in Nogales," *North American Congress on Latin America*, November 5, 2012, <https://nacla.org/blog/2012/11/6/remembering-jose-antonio-day-dead-nogales> (Accessed on July 8, 2013).

²⁵⁰ See "Mother of Slain Mexican Teen Sues U.S. Border Patrol Agents, Seeks Trial in Shooting Death of Her Son," *American Civil Liberties Union*, July 29, 2014, <https://www.aclu.org/immigrants-rights/mother-slain-mexican-teen-sues-us-border-patrol-agents-seeks-trial-shooting-death> (Accessed on September 25, 2014).

²⁵¹ As Holling poignantly reminds us, "Use and ascription of an ethnic label or phraseology in an object under analysis absent elaboration by a scholar(s) participates in a depoliticization of identities that are in fact highly charged, contested, negotiated, and yes, political. To rely upon *Latina/o* as a universal identity to reference the ethnically diverse groups falling within is to border on transforming the label itself into the 'safe' ethnic term devoid of political praxis and undertow subsequently paralleling the use of *Hispanic* in years prior" (310). Accordingly, my use of the term of "*Latina/o*" merits consideration. Rather than use terms such as "*Hispanic*" – which partly identifies populations according to a history of Spanish colonization – I opt to use the label "*Latino/a*" as a panethnic label for individuals in order to signal a broader and diverse arrangement of collective identities. In this essay, I occasionally qualify "*Latino/a*" with markers of national identity, especially if people quoted in this essay self-identify in such terms. See Michelle A. Holling, "Retrospective on Latin@ Rhetorical-Performance Scholarship: From 'Chicano Communication' to 'Latina/o Communication?,'" *The Communication Review* 11 (2008), 293-322; Claudia A. Anguiano and Karma R. Chavez, "DREAMers' Discourse: Young Latino/a Immigrants and the Naturalization of the American Dream, in *Latina/o Discourse in Vernacular Spaces: Somos de Una Voz?*, ed., Michelle A. Holling and Bernadette M. Calafell (Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2011), 17-44.

²⁵² Within the context of the United States, Latinos/as have been subjected to a range xenophobic metaphors intended to dehumanize them. For some excellent research that unpacks and examines these various metaphors, see Lisa Flores, "Constructing National Bodies: Public Argument in the English-Only Movement," in Thomas Hollihan, ed., *Argument at Century's End: Reflecting on the Past and Envisioning the Future* (Annandale, VA: National Communication Association, 2000), 436-445; Kent A. Ono and John M. Sloop, *Shifting Borders: Rhetoric, Immigration, and California's Proposition 187* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002); Lisa Flores, "Constructing Rhetorical Borders: Peons, Illegal Aliens, and Competing Narratives of Immigration," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 20 (2003): 362-387; Gary Gerstle, "The Immigrant as Threat to American Security: A Historical Perspective," in *The Maze of Fear: Security and Migration after 9/11*, ed., John Tirman (New York: The Press, 2004), 87-108; Demo, "Sovereignty Discourse," 302; Anne Teresa Demo, "The Afterimage: Immigration Policy After Elian," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 10 (2007), 27-50; J. David Cisneros, "Contaminated Communities: The Metaphor of 'Immigrant as Pollutant' in Media Representations of Immigration," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 11 (2008): 569-602; Karma Chavez, "Embodied Translation: Dominant Discourse and Communication with Migrant Bodies-as-Text," *The Howard Journal of Communication* 20 (2009): 18-36; D. Robert DeChaine, ed., *Border Rhetorics: Citizenship and Identity on the US-Mexico Border* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2012); Otto Santa Ana, *Brown Tide Rising: Metaphors of Latinos in Contemporary American Public Discourse* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2012).

²⁵³ The US has deployed its military to stymie the flow of migration along the US-Mexico border at least since the annexation of Mexican territories in the wake of the Texas Revolution of 1836 and the Mexican-American War. By the early 20th century, the US established Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) and the paramilitary organization "Border Patrol" in order to pacify Texas-Mexican uprisings, contain the spread of the Mexican

Revolution, and execute “Operation Wetback” in 1954, a “military-style roundup campaign” that apprehended and deported hundreds of thousands of Mexican immigrants. During the Cold War, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) conducted an array of “low-intensity, counterinsurgency” campaigns throughout the central and southern Americas and installed governments that administered genocides and other human rights abuses in nations such as Chile, Uruguay, Honduras, and Nicaragua (for example). The US military was also instrumental in conducting “antidrug and counterterrorism operations” in Mexico during America’s so-called “War on Drugs.” By 1994, the “Southwest Border Strategy” – which comprised a range of anti-immigration policies such as “Operation Hold the Line” in El Paso, “Operation Gatekeeper” in San Diego, and “Operation Safeguard” in Tucson – required the US military to fortify densely populated migration areas (e.g., El Paso-Juarez) and push undocumented migration into more treacherous and deadly desert terrains. These “deterrence strategies” are particularly troubling given that the US’s ratification of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1992 put millions of Mexican farmers out of work, proliferated conditions of environmental devastation and labor exploitation, displaced Mexicans from their lands, and compelled them to migrate into North America in search of employment. Ultimately, then, the renewed militarization of the US-Mexico border in the 21st century is not so much a supplanting of these 19th- and 20th-century anti-immigration policies as much as they are a continuation of such policies in the service of America’s War on Terror. For a more comprehensive historical account of the relationships between the US military and migration along the US-Mexico border, see Timothy Dunn, *The Militarization of the U.S.-Mexico Border 1978-1992: Low-Intensity Conflict Doctrine Comes Home* (Austin, TX: CMAS Books, 1996); Nicholas De Genova, “The Legal Production of Mexican/Migrant ‘Illegality,’” *Latino Studies* 2 (2004): 160-185; Matthew Coleman, “Between Public Policy and Foreign Policy: U.S. Immigration Law Reform and the Undocumented Migrant,” *Urban Geography* 29 (2008): 4-28. see Justin Akers Chacon and Mike Davis, *No One is Illegal: Fighting Racism and State Violence on the U.S.-Mexico Border* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2006), 201-225; Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004); Miguel Antonio Levario, *Militarizing the Border: When Mexicans Became the Enemy* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M Press, 2012).

²⁵⁴ George W. Bush, “Homeland Security President Directive 2: Combating Terrorism through Immigration Policies,” *Department of Homeland Security*, October 29, 2001, <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nspd/hspd-2.htm> (Accessed on April 4, 2015).

²⁵⁵ In addition, of the 50.5 billion dollar budget for DHS’s 2001 fiscal year, 10.9 billion went to CBP, 5.7 billion went to ICE, and 2.7 billion went to Citizenship and Immigration Service (CIS). Tanya Maria Golash-Boza, *Immigration Nation: Raids, Detentions, and Deportations in Post-9/11 America* (Paradigm Publishing, 2012), 48.

²⁵⁶ Some examples of “interior enforcement” include: “Operation Streamline” in 2008, H.R. 4437 “The Border Protection, Anti-Terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act” of 2005, Arizona’s SB 1070, Secure Fence Act of 2006.

²⁵⁷ Iwimana, “What Border Enforcement Actually Looks Like.”

²⁵⁸ “Fact Sheet: Alliance to Combat Transnational Threat – Arizona/Sonora Corridor,” *Customs and Border Protection*, February 8, 2011, http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/newsroom/fact_sheets/border/arizona_factsheet.xml (Accessed on April 4, 2014); “On A Typical Day of the Fiscal Year,” *Customs and Border Protection*, March 7, 2012, http://www.cbp.gov/linkhandler/cgov/about/accomplish/typical_day_fy11.ctt/typical_day_fy11.pdf (Accessed on April 4, 2014). According to Raymond Michalowski, “the deployment of military personnel, machinery, and tactics throughout the U.S.-Mexico borderlands reframes immigration control as war-fighting, and migrants as the enemy . . . [thereby] conflating northbound migrants with foreign terrorists and criminals to justify calls for even more border militarization.” Raymond Michalowski, “Border militarization and Migrant Suffering: A Case of Transnational Social Injury,” *Social Justice* 3 (2007): 68. “Office of Air and Marine Fact Sheet,” *Customs and Border Protection*, January 24, 2011, http://www.cbp.gov/linkhandler/cgov/border_security/am/documents/oam_fact_sheets/air_marine.ctt/air_marine.pdf (Accessed on April 4, 2014).

²⁵⁹ Doris Meissner, Donald Kerwin, Muzaffar Chishti, and Claire Bergeron, “Immigration Enforcement in the United States: The Rise of a Formidable Machinery,” (*Migration Policy Institute*: Washington D.C., 2013).

²⁶⁰ Golash-Boza, *Immigration Nation*, 65. See also, Olivia T. Ruiz Marrojo, “Undocumented Families in Times of Deportation at the San Diego-Tijuana Border,” *Journal of Borderlands Studies* (2014), 1-13; Jacqueline Stevens,

"America's Secret ICE Castles," *The Nation*, January 4th, 2010, <http://www.thenation.com/article/americas-secret-ice-castles#> (Accessed on October 29, 2001).

²⁶¹ Golash-Boza, *Immigration Nation*, 41, 84-85.

²⁶² "Culture of Cruelty: Abuse and Impunity in Short-Term U.S. Border Patrol Custody," *No More Death/No Mas Muertas*, 2011, http://www.cultureofcruelty.org/documents/2011_report/ (Accessed on April 4, 2014), 42. Doris Meissner, "Moving Beyond Illegal Immigration Enforcement Policies," *Washington Post*, January 7, 2013, http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/moving-beyond-illegal-immigration-enforcement-policies/2013/01/06/a9bdf05c-56ca-11e2-bf3e-76c0a789346f_story.html (Accessed April 4, 2014). In addition, as of 2013, Congress issued a juridical quota titled the "detention bed mandate," which commanded ICE to fill 34,000 beds in 250 detention facilities with undocumented migrants per day.²⁶²

²⁶³ The Mexican Ministry of Foreign Relations, for example, estimates that the official number of migrant deaths is underestimated by US sources by as much as 300%. See Michaloski, "Border Militarization," 63-65. Michaloski, "Border Militarization," 63-65; Ananda Rose, "Death in the Desert," *The New York Times*, June 21, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/22/opinion/migrants-dying-on-the-us-mexico-border.html?_r=0 (Accessed on November 10, 2012). Moreover, *No More Deaths/No Mas Muertos* conducted interviews with over 4,000 detained and deported migrants, concluding that state-sanctioned procedures for detainment and deportation persistently violate fundamental human rights such as depriving detained migrants water and sleep and neglecting to offer treatment for life threatening medical conditions. *No More Deaths*, "Culture of Cruelty," 4. Such overwhelming data of flagrant human rights abuses is even more troubling due to the seeming absence of any accountability or oversight on the part of border patrol agencies. Not only are all oversight committees under the jurisdiction of the DHS (e.g., CBP and the Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties), but the Justice Department legitimates the execution and enforcement of anti-immigration policies within a civil register, thereby exempting its procedures from constitutional restrictions that apply to US criminal cases. The paradox, therefore, is that immigration is governed as a civil matter even though the defendants are afforded fewer civil protections (e.g., due process, habeas corpus. See Tanya Golash-Boza, *Due Process Denied: Detentions and Deportations in the United States* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

²⁶⁴ Golash-Boza, *Immigration Nation*, 40-41.

²⁶⁵ Robert DeChaine, "Bordering the Civic Imaginary: Alienization, Fence Logic, and the Minutemen Civil Defense Corps," *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* 95 (2009): 44; Robert DeChaine, "For Rhetorical Border Studies," in *Border Rhetorics: Citizenship and Identity on the US-Mexico Frontier*, ed., Robert DeChaine (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2012), 1

²⁶⁶ Anne Teresa Demo, "Sovereignty Discourse and Contemporary Immigration Politics," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 91 (2005): 295, 306. See also, Kent Ono, "Borders that Travel: Matters of the Figural Border," *Border Rhetorics: Citizenship and Identity on the US-Mexico Frontier*, ed., Robert DeChaine (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2012), 20-21; Raka Shome, "Space Matters: The Power and Practice of Space," *Communication Theory* 13 (2003): 45; David Cisneros, *The Border Crossed Us: Rhetorics of Borders, Citizenship, and Latina/o Identity* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2014).

²⁶⁷ Shome, "Space Matters," 47. See also, Kent Ono, "Borders That Travel: Matters of the Figural Border," in *Border Rhetorics: Citizenship and Identity on the US-Mexico Frontier*, ed., Robert DeChaine (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2012): 28.

²⁶⁸ In the words of Antonio Tomas De La Garza, Robert DeChaine, and Kent Ono: "Borders . . . are performed through violence, and that violence leaves scars in the land and on its people . . . Borders haunt, they intervene, and they wait for the right time before they seize the moment, reterritorializing occupied territories and remaking the discursivity and materiality of locations. Rhetoric has much to say about borders, but the material is absolutely crucial to what rhetoricians can and do say. And knowing history, thus being reminded of it, can change how and what things are." Antonio Tomas De La Garza, D. Robert DeChaine, and Kent A. Ono, "(Re)Bordering the Scholarly Imaginary: The State and Future of Rhetorical Border Studies," In *Rhetoric Across Borders*, ed. Anne Teresa Demo (Parlor Press: Anderson, South Carolina, 2015), 115-116.

²⁶⁹ Claudia Aburto Guzman, "Forward," in Kathryn Ferguson, Norma A. Price, and Ted Parks, ed., *Crossing With the Virgin: Stories from the Migrant Trail* (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 2010).

²⁷⁰ Alive Driver, "Ciudad Juarez as a Palimpsest: Searing for Ecotestimonios," in *Pushing the Boundaries of Latine American Testimony: Metamorphoses and Migrations*, ed., Louise Detwiler and Janis Breckenridge (New York: Palgrave, 2012), 181-200.

²⁷¹ Ortego and O'Dell, "Deadly Border Agent Incidents Cloaked in Silence."

²⁷² For example, Ariana E. Vigil, *War Echoes: Gender and Militarization in U.S. Latina/o Cultural Production* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2014), 156-189.

²⁷³ In a recent interview, Araceli Rodríguez, the mother of Elena Rodríguez, is quoted as saying the following: "I don't want my son to be forgotten. I want people to keep talking". Alan Yuhas, "Justice for Jose? Border Shooting of Mexican Teen Raises Constitutional Issues," *The Guardian*, May 31, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/may/31/jose-antonio-us-mexico-border-shooting-constitutional-rights> (Accessed on June 18, 2015).

²⁷⁴ For a definition of the term "amnesic rhetoric," see endnote 30 in the introduction to this dissertation.

²⁷⁵ Robin Reineke, "Arizona: Naming the Dead from the Desert," *British Broadcasting Company*, January 16, 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-21029783> (Accessed April 4, 2014).

²⁷⁶ For more research concerning the United States' "deterrence strategy," see Dunn, *The Military of the U.S.-Mexico Border*; Davis, *No One is Illegal*; Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*; Levario, *Militarizing the Border*.

²⁷⁷ Such a lacuna of information about migrants' corpses is especially troubling given that US Department of Homeland Security's uses advanced technological resources called "biometrics" to compile enormous amounts of forensic information on an array of migrant activities both outside and within the United States. See Guadalupe Correa-Cabrera and Terence M. Garrett, "The Phenomenology of Perception and Fear; Security and the Reality of the US-Mexico Border," *Journal of Borderland Studies* (2014), 1-13.

²⁷⁸ Maria Jimenez, *Humanitarian Crisis: Migrant Deaths at the U.S.-Mexico Border*, American Civil Liberties Union and Mexico's National Commission of Human Rights, October 1, 2009, page 9.

²⁷⁹ Lynn Stephen, "Los Nuevos Desaparecidos y Muertos: Immigration, Militarization, Death, and Disappearance on Mexico's Borders," in Barbara Sutton, Sandra Morgen, and Julie Novkov, ed., *Security Disarmed: Critical Perspectives on Gender, Race, and Militarization* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers, 2008) 79-100.

²⁸⁰ See Maria Jimenez, *Humanitarian Crisis: Migrant Deaths at the U.S.-Mexico Border*, American Civil Liberties Union of San Diego and Imperial Counties, October 1, 2009, <https://www.aclu.org/files/pdfs/immigrants/humanitariancrisisreport.pdf> (Accessed September 25th, 2013).

²⁸¹ Quoted in Jimenez, *Humanitarian Crisis*, 47. See also, "'Los Desaparecidos' of the Border: Testimonies by Migrants and Their Families," *Race, Poverty, and the Environment* 6/7 (1996) 34-6.

²⁸² Quoted in Christine Kovic, "Searching for the Living, the Dead, and the new Disappeared on the Migrant Trail in Texas: Preliminary Report on Migrant Deaths in South Texas," *Houston United*, <http://prtl.uhcl.edu/portal/page/portal/HSR/HOME/HSR%20Programs/Anthropology/pdfs/Final%20Report%206%205%2013.pdf> (Accessed September 13, 2013).

²⁸³ For another alarming account of how PCOME provides the material resources necessary for recovering the histories of individual migrant suffering, see the story of Maricela Ahguipolla in *The Land of Open Graves*, 205-279.

²⁸⁴ There are over 600 graves for anonymous migrants at Holtville Terrace Park Cemetery. Despite the anonymity assigned to migrants at these graveyards, human rights organizations such as Border Angels have begun placing wooden crosses at the Holtville cemetery with the words "No Olvidados" painted on the surface.

²⁸⁵ Thomas Keenan, "Getting the Dead to Tell Me What Happened: Justice, Prosopopoeia, and Forensic Afterlives," in *Forensis: The Architecture of Public Truth*, ed., Eyal Weizman (New York: Sternberg Press, 2014). See also, Ed Vulliamy, *Amexica: War Along the Borderline* (New York: Picador, 2011), 40.

²⁸⁶ Thomas Keenan and Eyal Weizman, *Mengele's Skull: The Advent of Forensic Aesthetics* (New York: Sternberg Press, 2012), 28-9. For more on forensics, see Greg Siegal, *Forensic Media: Reconstructing Accidents in Accelerated Modernity* (London: Duke University Press, 2014); Eyal Weizman, "Forensis," in *Forensis: The Architecture of Public Truth*, ed., Eyal Weizman (New York: Sternberg Press, 2014), 22.

²⁸⁷ As Lisa Marie Cacho poignantly states, "Because the dead can force us all to reckon with the violences that produced them, the ever-present haunting of these restless ghosts will always be the most salient threat to the United States." Lisa Marie Cacho, *Social Death: Racialized Rightlessness and the Criminalization of the Unprotected* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 99.

²⁸⁸ For an excellent account of the politicality of prosopopoeia, see Megan Foley, "Voice Terri Schiavo: Prosopopeic Citizenship in the Democratic Aporia between Sovereignty and Biopower," *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 7 (2010): 381-400.

²⁸⁹ The Coalicion de Derechos Humanos also administers the "Arizona Recovered Human Remains Project," which serves as a catalogue of when and where identified and unidentified migrants perished in the borderlands. See <http://derechoshumanosaz.net/projects/arizona-recovered-bodies-project/>. Moreover, Reunited Families, a project of the International Consortium for Forensic Identification, is a similar project based out of south Texas and Brooks County. For more information, see <http://www.reunitingfamilies.org/>; <http://www.humaneborders.info/>.

²⁹⁰ The National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) is a valuable database designed to match missing persons reports with unidentified remains throughout the country. Although the Pima County Missing Migrant Project shares all data with NamUs, most other US medical and legal offices do not. Therefore, even as NamUs has proven effective in small measures, the NamUs database does not include genetic information (only circumstantial evidence such as date of disappearance, clothing that was worn, tattoos, dental conditions, and so forth), which is especially limiting in the case of migrants whose bodies are often decomposed beyond the point of recognition.

²⁹¹ Nicholas De Genova, Sandra Mezzadra, and John Pickles, ed., "New Keywords: Migration and Borders," *Cultural Studies* (2014), 11.

²⁹² Robin Reineke, "Lost in the System: Unidentified Bodies on the Border," *North American Congress on Latin America Report on the Americas* 46 (2013), 53.

²⁹³ *Who is Dayani Cristal?*, DVD, directed by Marc Silver (Pulse Films, 2014).

²⁹⁴ *Who is Dayani Cristal?*, 1:21:00.

²⁹⁵ See Allan Sekula, "Photography and the Limits of National Identity," *Grey Room* 55 (2014), 55; Thomas Keenan, "Counter-Forensics and Photography," *Grey Room* 55 (2014), 58-77.

²⁹⁶ According to the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (which is financed in large measure by the EPA's Border Environment Cooperation Committee), "border trash refers to items discarded by persons involved in illegal immigrations such as plastic containers, clothing, backpacks, foodstuffs, vehicles, bicycles, and papers." The department claims that the accumulation of such materials poses unquantifiable threats against "human health, the environment, and economic wellbeing," which in the words of the department, is derived from burdensome disposal costs, "vandalism," "damage [to] infrastructure and property," and "erosion of watersheds . . . vegetation and wildlife." See "What is Border Trash," *Arizona Border Trash*, April 8, 2013, <https://www.azbordertrash.gov/about.html> (Accessed April 4, 2014).

²⁹⁷ Arizona Bureau of Land Management, "Southern Arizona Project to Mitigate Environmental Damages Resulting from Illegal Border Activities: Fiscal Year 2013 Report," http://www.blm.gov/style/medialib/blm/az/pdfs/undoc_aliases.Par.4968.File.dat/FY-13.pdf, 1-3 (Accessed April 4, 2014).

²⁹⁸ Arizona Bureau of Land Management, "Southern Arizona Project," 5.

²⁹⁹ Arizona Bureau of Land Management, "Southern Arizona Project," 4.

³⁰⁰ For information on the environmental consequences of the US's border securitization, see Krista Schyler, *Continental Divide: Wildlife, People, and the Border Wall*, April 8, 2015, <http://www.sierraclub.org/borderlands/laws-waived-border> (Accessed May 10, 2015).

³⁰¹ For additional examples of the ways that migrants have been metaphorically framed as environmental threats, see Chavez, "Border Interventions," 56-60; Cisneros, "Contaminated Communities," 569-602; Juanita Sundberg and Bonnie Kaserman, "Cactus Carvings and Desert Defecations: Embodying Representations of Border Crossings in Protected Areas on the Mexico-US Border," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 25 (2007): 727-744; Rachel Shellabarger, et al., "The Influence of Place Meanings on Conservation and Human Rights in the Arizona Sonora Borderlands," *Environmental Communication* 6 (2012), 383-402.

Juanita Sundberg, "'Trash-Talk' and the Production of Quotidian Geopolitical Boundaries in the USA-Mexico Borderlands," *Social & Cultural Geography* 9 (2008): 871-890.

³⁰² Giovanna Borradori, *Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jurgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); Brian Massumi, "The Future Birth of the Affective Fact: The Political Ontology of Threat," in *The Affect Theory Reader*, ed., Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Siegwirth (London: Duke

University Press, 2010), 53; Brad Evans, "Terror in All Eventuality," *Theory & Event*, 13 (2010); n/a; Cacho, *Social Death*, 61-96.

³⁰³ Eyal Weizman, "Matter against Memory," in *Forensis: The Architecture of Public Truth*, Eyal Weizman (New York: Sternberg Press, 2014), 368.

³⁰⁴ Liciana Parisi and Steve Goodman, "Mnemonic Control," in *Beyond Biopolitics: Essays on the Governance of Life and Dead*, ed., Patricia Ticineto Clough and Craig Willis (London: Duke University Press, 2011), 167.

³⁰⁵ "States of Exception" is not the first exhibit of its kind. For example Susan Harbage's "Walking the Border" and Maeve Hickey's "Lost and Found: Remnants of a Desert Passage" also gather and display migrants' ephemera as evidence of the changing geopolitical conditions and dangers facing Latino/a migrants in the 21st century. For more information, see Susan Harbage Page and Ines Valdez, "Residues of Border Control," *Southern Spaces* (2011), n/a. I'm indebted to Jason De Leon for notifying me of these similar exhibits.

³⁰⁶ Jason De Leon, "Undocumented Migration, Use Were, and the Materiality of Habitual Suffering in the Sonoran Desert," *Journal of Material Culture* (2013), 6. See also, Jason De Leon, "'Better to Be Hot than Caught': Excavating the Conflicting Roles of Migrant Material Culture," *American Anthropologist* 114 (2012): 477-495

³⁰⁷ For an example of the redemptive appropriation of trash in order to mobilize anti-colonial forms of agency, see Darrell Wanzer, "Trashing the System: Social Movement, Intersectional Rhetoric, and Collective Agency in the Young Lords Organization Garbage Offensive," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 92 (2006), 174-201.

³⁰⁸ De Leon, "Undocumented Migration," 22.

³⁰⁹ Lisa Marie Cacho, *Social Death: Racialized Rightlessness and the Criminalization of the Unprotected* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 99. Although the topic of noncitizen soldiers exceeds the scope of this essay, it is worth acknowledging that they too serve as war-torn bodies unraveled by the US military apparatus. According to Cacho, "those Latinas/os (legal or not) who were not marked as possessing the 'background-body' of 'terrorism' within U.S. borders were extended the 'opportunity' to earn social value for themselves, their families, and their communities by participating in the war on terror as soldiers and supporters" (98). The assimilationist conceit of these emergent formations ultimately works to "conceal the violences that U.S. systems of value direct toward its devalued and disposable others for the purpose of silencing the dead of all nations and nationalities" (99). Recruiting noncitizen soldiers becomes a way for state institutions and military agencies to adopt a guise of multiculturalism, pluralism, and even a democratic inclusion. Such a political maneuver accomplishes at least two troubling consequences: (1) it implies that heroic self-sacrifice of soldiers is an equal opportunity practice (even as African Americans and Latinos are disproportionately targeted for enlistment); and (2) it conceals the extent to which the histories of US warfare and, in particular, the War on Terror are racially motivated campaigns (107). As Cacho remarks, "For those living with little or no rights, the possibility of dying on the front lines is transformed into an 'opportunity' for legal recognition" (108). Opting for and valorizing patriotic sacrifice becomes a method for noncitizens to validate their right and entitlement to legal personhood, even as it also becomes a biopolitical technique for managing immigrant populations in the US. Dead noncitizen soldiers are yet another material of US war making: "Far from a 'reward,' posthumous citizenship is a technology of necropower, another means by which the state retains and legitimates its sovereignty through controlling the dead . . . Posthumous citizenship is not just symbolic belonging; it allows the state to claim the rights to these individuals' stories as American stories, making sure to silence or censor what they might have to say otherwise" (110). See also, Hector Amaya, "Dying America," *Latino Studies*, 5 (2007):3-24.

³¹⁰ Arjun Appadurai, "Archive and Aspiration," in *Information is Alive*, ed., Jake Brouwer and Arjen Mulder (Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 2003), 2; Arjun Appadurai, "The Capacity to Aspire," in *Culture and Public Action*, ed., Vijayendra Rao and Michael Walton (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003).

³¹¹ Appadurai, "Archive and Aspiration," 7.

³¹² Jose Esteban Munoz, "Ephemera as Evidence: Introductory Notes to Queer Acts," *Women and Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 8 (1996), 9.

Chapter 5

“The Imperatives of Rhetorical Critique in Times of War”

Much has changed since Carlos Arredondo immolated himself and then built a makeshift memorial for his son in the Spring of 2005. President Barack Obama took office, partially on a platform that promised to shut down Guantanamo Bay and bring an end to America’s longest running military campaign. The President then repeatedly withdrew and re-surfed US troops through various battlegrounds in the Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine, and Libya. American military campaigns acquired a new brand identity (e.g., “Overseas Contingency Operations”), and drone warfare became the new weapon of American military aggression. Guantanamo Bay remains in operation and approximately 80 detainees remain imprisoned there. Both Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden were executed, but now ISIS stands as the new bullseye for America’s war against terrorism. Thousands of additional US troops died in combat since 2004, and tens of thousands more sustained life-altering physical and emotional traumas.³¹³ Moreover, 1,200,000 non-American civilians perished in the battlegrounds of Iraq and Afghanistan by virtue of simply being there.³¹⁴ Indeed, the fallout of America’s 21st-century military campaigns have engendered a world markedly different from the one that witnessed the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.³¹⁵

And yet, the war wages on, just as indeterminably and opaquely as the years following President Bush’s 2003 announcement on the deck of the USS Abraham Lincoln. Although the US military’s practices, campaigns, and “costs” have waxed and waned in intensity over the years, the US military remains a volatile and powerful global force, one that continues to produce war-torn bodies and landscapes in its preternatural defense of the American way of

life. The challenge, then, is not to diagnose contemporary US war-making in terms of its moral pursuits and failings or even in terms of the empirical changes in expenses, strategies, and missions. Rather, the challenge is to maintain a vigorous orientation toward identifying those new and recurring junctures of military violence and power that cohere, intensify, slowdown, and reemerge in both predictable and unexpected ways. The task, in short, is to attend to the myriad manifestations of 21st-century US military violence and power, and to trace the various consequences that the US military produces on particular war-torn bodies and landscapes.

But the imperative to develop a more comprehensive and nuanced perspective on the “costs of war” is directionless if it is not supported by a rhetorical repertoire that lends the histories of US war-making to public remembrance, commemoration, and memorialization. The production of such a rhetorical repertoire, however, is a vital cultural struggle. Indeed, a persistent cultural anxiety that bears heavily on the nation’s conscience is the fear that Americans’ memory of war is rapidly dissipating, that war’s carnage is lost on most civilians, and that the contemporary histories of US military violence and power have receded into the dustbin of America’s pastime. Consider, for example, a 2015 article written for *The Atlantic*, titled “Forgetting Afghanistan.” “It seems,” writes author Dominic Tierney, “as if Americans have signed onto a pact of forgetting: a collective effort to expunge all memory of the war.”³¹⁶ Tierney continues:

It takes a concerted effort – whether conscious or subconscious – to *not* think about a war where thousands of fellow citizens have died. Granted, the erasure is incomplete. The war flickers at the edges of people’s consciousness. But the mind rebels against giving the conflict any serious contemplation . . . There’s a profound desire to change the subject. The popular narrative was once about saving Afghans. Now the focus is on getting American soldiers home, and Afghans have disappeared from the story.³¹⁷

Americans, Tierney surmises, are bent on forgetting the troubling histories of America's 21st-century wars. Perhaps Tierney is right – Americans may simply want to forget the whole violent affair and move on with their lives, if they have the good fortune to do so. Notwithstanding the willful amnesia of some Americans, Tierney's lament exemplifies a more troubling demonstration of the rhetorical norms through which American culture selectively remembers the global war against terrorism. Although I'm sympathetic to Tierney's claim that Americans programmatically sentimentalize "the Troops" while forgetting Afghan civilian casualties, Tierney's rhetoric reduces the "cost" of America's 21st-century military campaigns to "American soldiers" and "Afghans." In commanding readers to remember US casualties and dead Afghan civilians, Tierney selects only one important juncture of US military violence while deflecting readers' attention from those multifarious, oblique, and oft-neglected "costs of war." One of the primary arguments of this project has been that contemporary permutations of 21st-century military violence exceed those conventional images of US soldiers, Afghan mountains, and crumbling cityscapes. What gets lost amidst the rhetorical grandeur of 4th of July parades, patriotic bumper stickers, Hollywood blockbusters, Memorial Day commemorations, and (ironically) public lamentations on the failings of American public memory are all those forms of US military violence and power that injure civilians across transnational landscapes.

At the beginning of this dissertation, I raised three primary research questions. The first question asked, "What communities find themselves afflicted by 21st-century junctures of military violence and power?" My case studies demonstrate that lay definitions of "military violence" severely deflect the multifaceted roles that US military institutions and policies play in harming, risking, killing, contaminating, threatening, imprisoning, and abandoning particular

populations. The mission-critical problem now is what “counts” as military violence, and to interrogate the rhetorical norms through which populations and nations commemorate its consequences. In the preceding pages and chapters, I’ve sought to explore myriad junctures of US military violence and power and to unpack the rhetorical mechanisms through which such violence has been exacted, sustained, and even erased from the public record. US military violence, I argued, is not simply exerted through the barrel of a gun. US military violence is also exerted through the (mis)management of soldiers’ cemeteries, through the environmental contamination of domestic ecologies, and through the physicality of the US-Mexico borderlands. Families of dead US soldiers, “contaminated communities,” and (un)documented Latino/a migrants become war-torn through the everyday operations and policies of particular military institutions and agencies. Although their violence was not exacted “in the heat of battle,” it was nonetheless systematically produced and managed through US military practices that directly or obliquely injured and killed civilians whose only mistake was to find themselves inhabiting varying degrees of proximity and vulnerability to lethal military institutions. Although not labeled as “casualties of war,” their suffering and death was the byproduct of a US military apparatus that assaults civilian populations in the name of national security. In measuring the “cost of war” only according to normativizing tropes such as US soldiers, enemy casualties, and financial expenses, the attrition of these war-torn bodies remain under the radar of American political consciousness and risk disappearing from the historical record completely.

To be sure, these three case studies should not be interpreted as a comprehensive survey of all junctures of 21st-century US military violence and power. Indeed, one critical

charge going forward is to attend to those additional junctures of military violence and power that have not been explored in this study. The demonization of Muslim(-Americans), the militarization of local law enforcement agencies, the proliferation of military-grade weaponry in civilian homes (and “the shootings” they enable), the inclusion of gay and transgendered citizens into the ranks, and the system of rape and sexual assault in the military are just some urgent examples that require further attention. The case studies presented in this dissertation are only three stories that belong to a much larger, global saga of US military violence and power in the 21st century.

The second key research question that guided this project asked, “How have America’s 21st-century wars been waged through a strategically crafted imagining of the nation’s past, and what rhetorical weapons has the state used to exact its objectives?” Herein lies one of the critical themes that tie each of the aforementioned case studies of war-torn bodies and landscapes together: Specifically, one of the most pervasive and insidious weapons of 21st-century US military violence and power is the rhetorical weapon of public memory and forgetting. If there is one painful lesson that each of these case studies evidences, it is that a powerful modality of military violence is that which takes aim at public memory itself. What the Arlington National Cemetery demonstrates – and section 60 in particular – is that even dead soldiers can be mobilized for the war effort. Metonyms of heroic self-sacrifice de-historicize and abstract 21st-century US military casualties in ways that deflect remembrance away from the legacies of US military violence. Within the context of the Kelly AFB, military administrators deployed three commemorative containment strategies – i.e., technocratic discourse, myths of ecological renewal, and economic modes of remembrance – in order to

dematerialize the conditions of toxicity that compromise residents' health and safety. In repressing the Kelly AFB's toxic legacy, the state's amnestic rhetoric powerfully sustained the hegemony of lethal military institutions while upholding the junctures of toxicity against which residents struggle for survival.³¹⁸ In the case of the US-Mexico borderlands, the US Border Patrol and other government organizations specifically leveraged the harsh physicality of the US-Mexico deserts and even destroyed material evidence of migrants' corpses in order to make histories of anti-immigration military campaigns go missing. The US Border Patrol also framed migrants' survival within militarized borderlands as an explicit threat to American environments, thereby greenwashing those deterrence and detainment strategies that have been harming and killing hundreds of migrants each year since 2001. Each of these case studies – dead soldiers in military cemeteries, residents in the Toxic Triangle, and Latino/a migrants in the borderlands – demonstrate some of the manifestations of 21st-century US military violence and power. Moreover, they also reveal that the US military wages assaults on these war-torn bodies and landscapes through a strategically crafted amnestic rhetoric that distorts and, in some cases, disappears histories of suffering and death. If one of the defining features of post-9/11 American political culture is the saturation of militarism throughout everyday life, then military violence, regrettably, has many faces, and its rhetorical constitution and management is just as multifarious and dynamic. Therefore, the task before us is to account for the quotidian, clandestine, and "invisible" manifestations of military violence and subjugation, as well as the symbolic practices through which such violence is sustained. Indeed, it is precisely at such junctures where productive critique can powerfully intervene in the obfuscation of military violence, as well as the dissent that occurs therein.

Third and finally, this dissertation asked, “How have those communities crafted dissident memories in an effort to dismantle the state-sanctioned conditions that compromise their lives, and to what extent did these communities succeed in making their lives less disposable? This project has also been about the promises and failures of rhetorical agency and, in particular, the political acts of remembrance and dissent through which war-torn populations struggle to make life possible within particular junctures of US military violence and power. Accordingly, this project has not only been about expanding our definitions of US military violence and power. It has also been about expanding what does and does not count as dissent within our contemporary US war culture. Accordingly, each of the case studies in this project explored the dissident memories through which particular communities have challenged the state’s material and rhetorical mechanisms of military violence and power. “Dissent,” Robert Ivie argues, “works toward the realignment of common sense, which is the *modus operandi* of democracy as a politics of contestation. The plausibility and credibility of dissent depends on leveraging critique with cultural capital to sustain constructive relations in a context of conflict and to prevent friction and rivalry from degenerating into hostility.”³¹⁹ Similarly, I suggest that dissent is a critical tactic with which war-torn populations vie for public recognition and galvanize public opinion against conditions of state-sanctioned attrition and death. “Arlington West” fosters commemorative rituals for mourning dead soldiers that would be otherwise repressed at state-sanctioned military cemeteries, i.e., a way of remembering the dead that problematizes abstracted histories of national martyrdom, mobilizes anger against military malfeasance, and forges shared experiences of personal grief and trauma. One cultural effect that “Arlington West” achieved was the circulation of Vietnam-era commemorative

tactics that allow soldiers to be remembered without affirming the legitimacy of war. Similarly, against the amnestic rhetorics deployed by Air Force administrators, residents of the Toxic Triangle crafted dissident memories of toxic exposure through toxicology reports, environmental justice demonstrations, and makeshift memorials in order to circulate narratives of contamination and exposure. Such commemorative tactics challenged the Air Force's rhetorical "containment" of the Kelly AFB's toxic legacy in at least two primary ways. First, they destabilized those scientific "proofs" that disqualified the histories of state-sanctioned contamination as well as the causal relationships between exposure to lethal chemicals and their deleterious effects on human health. Second, they refute the dangerous assumption that the alarming clusters of cancer and other illnesses in the Toxic Triangle are unfortunate coincidences rather than symptoms of environmental injustice. Within the context of the US-Mexico borderlands, organizations such as the Pima County Missing Migrant Project created an international database that aggregated recent Latino/a migrant deaths within the borderlands, and attributed names and histories to migrant corpses in hopes of returning the dead to the bereaved. Such a practice is significant, because it assembles corporeal and rhetorical fragments with which communities can grieve the loss of a loved one, as well as craft dissident memories of the US military's assault on Latino/a migrants. Moreover, the archeologists and curators who built "State of Exception" recovered migrant ephemera in order to provide a compelling display of Latino/a migrants' contemporary struggles to survive the increasingly war-torn landscapes between the United States and Mexico. The political effects of these dissident memories are important, as they not only returned corpses to the bereaved but also disrupt the lacunae that the US Border Patrol imposes on the histories of US military violence

and power within the borderlands. Taken as a whole, what these case studies demonstrate is a particular texture of dissent in 21st-century US war culture. Even if these acts of dissent have not yielded a wholesale dismantling of the US war machine, they have nonetheless succeeded in inserting war-torn populations into national discourses and even bringing about material protections for these war-torn populations.

Finally, what I also hope to have demonstrated in this project is that rhetorical critique – and the critical humanities more broadly – is not simply a neutral vehicle with which to offer an objective, independent arbitration of cultural history. Rhetorical studies does not exist in a world severed from the phenomena it examines, and the fantasy of the objective scholar is an irresponsible orientation to scholarly critique, especially when one's case studies concern issues of social (in)justice, political abandonment, and systemic violence. What I hope to have performed in each of my case studies is a particular orientation to cultural critique, one that embraces scholarship as a discursive activity that is enmeshed within broader systems of power. Within the context of contemporary US war culture, scholarly critique can be a politically charged process of rhetorical invention, at least insofar as it articulates and “finesses” cultural idioms, terminologies, and discourses through which war-torn populations renegotiate and occasionally even dismantle the junctures of US military violence that compromise their lives.³²⁰ Because rhetorical critique plays a considerable role in generating social knowledge, practical wisdom, and ethical perspectives regarding the exigencies of US war culture, then one of the most vital possibilities for rhetorical scholarship is to circulate and publicize dissident memories of US war culture that are concealed, repressed, and distorted by the state's amnestic rhetorics.³²¹ If, as Ivie suggests, “theorizing is a mode of attitudinizing,” then I submit

that rhetorical critiques of war should participate in cultural struggles over the legacies of contemporary US military violence and power.³²² As Judith Butler reminds us:

If the humanities has a future as cultural criticism, and cultural criticism has a task at the present moment, it is no doubt to return us to the human where we do not expect to find it, in its frailty and at the limits of its capacity to make sense. We would have to interrogate the emergence and vanishing of the human at the limits of what we can know, what we can hear, what we can see, what we can sense.³²³

One task of critique requires an articulation of particular junctures of US military power and violence. However, perhaps a more important task demands that scholars of rhetoric facilitate the circulation of dissident tactics that, however fleeting, contingent, and episodic, nonetheless bear significantly on the vitality and persistence of particular communities' livelihood. In the preceding chapters, I hope to have affirmed an additional attitude of dissent and rhetorical critique, one that not only interrogates the processes through which rhetorics of war, military violence, and vulnerability cohere within particular contexts. Additionally, I aimed to publicize and circulate the available repertoires of dissident memory that have been and can be enacted within particular junctures of 21st-century US military violence and power. Ultimately, my project hopes to invite us to rethink and remember our military pasts differently, to highlight those perspectives and experiences that have been occluded by state-sanctioned amnesia, and to commemorate acts of dissent that challenge the severity of resurgent junctures of US military violence and power.

Notes

³¹³ Department of Defense, "OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF) U.S. CASUALTY STATUS," January 2012, <http://www.defense.gov/casualty.pdf> (Accessed December 12, 2015).

³¹⁴ Physicians for Social Responsibility, "Body Count: Casualty Figures After 10 Years of the "War on Terror," March 2015, <http://www.psr.org/assets/pdfs/body-count.pdf> (Accessed December 12, 2015).

³¹⁵ For a timeline of America's war on terror, see the Appendix.

³¹⁶ Dominic Tierney, "Forgetting Afghanistan: Americans are Debating Whether to Fight ISIS, without Acknowledging that They're Already at War," *The Atlantic*, June 24, 2015, <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/06/afghanistan-war-memory/396701/> (Accessed December 12, 2015).

³¹⁷ Tierney, "Forgetting Afghanistan."

³¹⁸ For my definition of "amnesic rhetoric," see endnote 31 in the introduction.

³¹⁹ Robert L. Ivie, "Enabling Democratic Dissent," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 101 (2015), 49.

³²⁰ Robert L. Ivie, "Productive Criticism Then and Now," *American Journal of Communication* 4 (2001), 1; Robert L. Ivie, "Finessing the Demonology of War: Toward a Practical Aesthetic of Humanizing Dissent," *Javnost – The Public* 14 (2007): 37-54.

³²¹ Robert L. Ivie, "Editorials," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*.

³²² Robert L. Ivie, "Productive Criticism: Then and Now," *ACSJournal* 4 (2001), 2.

³²³ Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of mourning and Violence* (New York: Verso, 2004); Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* (New York: Verso, 2009), 151. See also, Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* (New York: Verso, 2009).

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“Appendix”

America’s 21st-Century War on Terrorism: A Truncated Timeline

It is worth emphasizing that this “truncated timeline” is a selective collection of key events related to the War on Terror. The events listed here primarily concern US domestic policies and events that reconfigured a variety of junctures of US military violence and power. I do, however, encourage readers to familiarize themselves with a broader global perspective on the War on Terror. One useful resource would concern The Counter-Terrorism Guide.¹

2001

September 11, 2001

19 al-Qaeda terrorists crash commercial planes into the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. and the World Trade Center Towers in New York, killing roughly 3000 people (300 of which were non-US citizens).

October 7, 2001

US (along with Britain, France, Australia, and the Afghani “Northern Alliance”) launch “Operation Enduring Freedom” in Afghanistan.

October 26, 2001

Senate passes “Anti-Terrorism” bill.

October 29, 2001

President Bush signs into law the “Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intervene and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001” (i.e., “the USA Patriot Act”).

November 14, 2001

US Military fires missiles at an *Al Jazeera* office in Kabul.

2002

January 11, 2002

US transforms a US Naval Base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba into a “detention facility” and the Bush administration argues that the base can operate outside of US constitutional law and the Geneva Conventions.

February 4, 2002

The CIA first uses an unmanned “Predator” drone in a targeted killing.

¹ <https://www.nctc.gov/site/timeline.html>

February 7, 2002

The White House declares that the Taliban are “unlawful combatants” who do not qualify for protections under the Geneva Conventions.

February 21, 2002

Al-Qaeda releases a video in which they behead Daniel Pearl.

February 27, 2002

Almost 200 political prisoners at the US Naval Base in Guantanamo Bay launch a brief hunger strike to protest against the conditions of their imprisonment.

November 25, 2002

The Department of Homeland Security is formally established.

2003

February 5, 2003

Secretary of State Colin Powell delivers a speech to the United Nations “proving once and for all” that Saddam Hussein possesses “Weapons of Mass Destruction” (i.e., “WMDs”).

March 13, 2003

John Yoo and the DOJ’s Office of Legal Council draft the notorious “torture memos,” which authorized the President to utilize “enhanced interrogation techniques” against people who the US military deems “enemy combatants”.

March 19, 2003

US attacks Baghdad, marking the start of “Operation Iraqi Freedom”.

May 1, 2003

President Bush declares that “Operation Iraqi Freedom” is a “Mission Accomplished” on the *USS Abraham Lincoln*.

December 13, 2003

US forces capture Saddam Hussein during Operation Red Dawn.

2004

November 6, 2004

George W. Bush is reelected as the President of the United States.

April 28 and 30, 2004

Sixty Minutes II and *The New Yorker* (authored by Seymour Hersch) publicize the so-called “Teguba Report” and release photographs of US soldiers torturing “detainees” at the US Naval Base in Guantanamo Bay.

June 28, 2004

In *Rasul v. Bush* and *Hamdi v. Bush*, The Supreme Court of the United States rules that detainees have the right to legal representation and that US citizens must have a meaningful opportunity to challenge the basis of their detention, respectively.

July 7, 2004

Paul Wolfowitz establishes the Combatant Status Review Tribunals at the US Naval Base in Guantanamo Bay.

2005

November 19, 2005

US Marines kill 24 unarmed Iraqi men, women, and children after an “Improvised Explosive Device” (i.e., an “IED”) killed Lance Corporal Miguel Terrazas (aka, “the Haditha Massacre”). While eight Marines initially faced manslaughter charges, all said charges were dropped by 2008, sparking outrage in Iraq.

December 2005

President Bush signs the “Detainee Treatment Act,” which feigns a prohibition against torture while formally barring “detainees” *habeas corpus* protections.

December 14, 2005

Despite defending “Operation Iraqi Freedom” as a justifiable military campaign, President Bush admits that the original reasons for invading Iraq – i.e., that Saddam Hussein possessed WMDs – was based on “faulty evidence.”

2006

June 30, 2006

In *Hamdan v. Rumsfeld*, the United States Supreme Court rules that military tribunals are unconstitutional and claims that the “Detainee Treatment Act” violated the prisoners’ constitutional rights.

October 17, 2006

President Bush signs the “Military Commissions Act” which reauthorized military commissions and bars *habeas corpus* protections for prisoners at Guantanamo Bay.

November 8, 2006

President Bush announces Rumsfeld’s resignation.

December 30, 2006

The Iraqi Government executes Saddam Hussein.

2007

January 10, 2007

President Bush announces that a “surge” of more than 20,000 US troops will deploy to Iraq.

March 26, 2007

After a federal inquiry, the Pentagon concedes that Pat Tillman was killed by “friendly fire,” despite the Pentagon’s earlier claims that Tillman was killed by “insurgents.”

April 24, 2007

Jessica Lynch testifies before the US House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, claiming that the media spectacle surrounding her capture and release were deliberately inaccurate accounts and part of a larger propaganda effort by the Pentagon.

September 16, 2007

Employees of the private military contractor Blackwater Inc. murder 14 innocent Iraqi civilians and injure an additional 17 at Baghdad’s Nisour Square.

2008

June 12, 2008

In *Boumediene v. Bush*, the Supreme Court of the United States rules that the “Military Commissions Act” is unconstitutional and that individuals detained at the US Naval Base in Guantanamo Bay are due their *habeas corpus* protections.

2009

January 20, 2009

Barack Obama is inaugurated as the 44th President of the United States.

November 5, 2009

Nidal Malik Hasan kills 13 people (and wounds 29 people) at Fort Hood, Texas. He is later convicted of 23 counts of murder in August 2013.

December 1, 2009

President Obama declares that a 30,000 troop “surge” will be deployed to Afghanistan.

2010

January 5-9, 2010

Bradley Manning, a soldier and intelligence analyst for the US Army, downloads approximately 490,000 classified military documents and contacts *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*. After both media outlets expressed little to no interest in the documents, Manning contacted Wikileaks.

April 8, 2010

The United States and the Russian Federation sign a new “Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty” (i.e., the “new START program”), which requires the United States and Russia to reduce nuclear missile launchers in half by 2021.

May-July, 2010

The US army arrested and charged Manning for several violations of the Uniform Code of Military Justice and the Espionage Act.

July 25, 2010

Wikileaks – along with *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, and *Der Spiegel* – releases over 91,000 classified military documents (i.e., the “Afghan War Logs”).

October 22, 2010

Wikileaks releases over 400,000 classified military documents (i.e., the “Iraq War Logs”)

November, 2010

Wikileaks begins releasing over 250,000 state department cables involving the US military installations in Guantanamo Bay (i.e., the “Guantanamo Bay Files”)

December 14, 2010

Border Patrol agent Brian Terry is shot and killed by Mexican drug smugglers who possessed US military-grade weapons. The death of Terry eventuated the “ATF Gunwalking Scandal.” This scandal involved the controversial “Fast and Furious Program,” whereby the ATF willingly sold military weapons to low-level drug cartels in hopes of tracking their distribution. This counter-terrorism tactic ultimately resulted in the disappearance of thousands of powerful military-grade weapons.

2011

September 10, 2011

Congress repeals “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell”.

September 11, 2011

The National September 11 Memorial and Museum at the World Trade Center opens on the 10th Anniversary of the “9/11 Terrorist Attacks”.

September 30, 2011

The CIA authorizes a drone strike that kills Anwar al-Aulaqi. Two weeks later, the CIA authorizes another drone strike that kills his son and US citizen Abdulrahman al-Aluaqi.

March 19, 2011

The US along with 19 other NATO forces launched military interventions in Libya (i.e., “Operation Unified Protector”).

April 20, 2011

Famed photojournalists and documentarians Tim Hetherington and Chris Hondros are killed while covering military conflicts in Libya.

May 2, 2011

President Obama announces the death of Osama Bin Laden.

October 21, 2011

President Obama declares the full withdrawal of troops in Iraq, leaving about 25,000 personnel, consulates, and military defense contractors.

October 20, 2011

Muammar Gaddafi is killed by “National Transitional Council” forces

October 31, 2011

NATO declares the end of “Operation Unified Protector”.

2012

January 10, 2012

Detainees at the US Naval Base in Guantanamo Bay stage another hunger strike to protest the 10-year anniversary of the opening of the detention facility.

January 20, 2012

The Invisible War is released at Sundance, prompting a systematic inquiry into sexual assault and rape in the US military.

November 6, 2012

President Obama is reelected as the President of the United States.

August 6, 2012

President Obama signs into law the “Janey Ensminger Act,” which provides medical care to military personnel and families who resided on Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune between the 1950s and 1980s, a period in which water contamination was regularly injuring and killing residents.

2013

January 14, 2013

An *Associate Press* study concludes that 349 active duty service member committed suicide in 2012, a number that has been alarmingly consistent since 2009. Consequently, more service members are dying as a result to suicide than to so-called “enemy fire”.

March 19, 2013

The 10-year anniversary of “Operation Iraqi Freedom”.

April 3, 2013

Djokhar Tsarnaev and Tamerlan Tsarnaev detonate a bomb during the Boston Marathon, killing three people and wounding 264.

June 5, 2013

The Guardian publishes classified information revealing the existence of the National Security Agency’s PRISM operation, a clandestine global surveillance apparatus that not only gathers vast amounts of data on domestic and non-citizen civilians but also acquires such data regardless of legal justification and privacy protections. This classified information was leaked by Edward Snowden, a former employee of the NSA.

July 30, 2013

In *United States v. Manning*, Judge Army Colonel Denise Lind convicted Chelsea Manning of 17 charges – five of which involved espionage and theft- but also acquitted her of aiding the enemy. She was later sentenced 21-35 years of imprisonment.

2014

June, 2014

After a CNN report from April, Veterans Affairs conducted an internal assessment of a VA clinic in Phoenix, concluding that at least 35 veterans died waiting for care that the VA failed to provide in a timely manner. Subsequent investigations discovered that over 120,000 cases of veterans requiring care have either been postponed for over 125 days or the cases have simply been abandoned. As a result, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shineski resigned and Obama signed congressional legislation demanding more funding and reform within the Veterans Health Administration.

August 8, 2014

The United States launches its first airstrikes against the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (i.e., “ISIS,” “ISIL”) in Northern Iraq. Later, this military campaign will be called “Operation Inherent Resolve”.

August 19, 2014

ISIS releases a video that depicts the beheading of US photojournalist James Foley.

September 11, 2014

Although President Obama assures Americans that the new military campaign against ISIS will not involve “boots on the ground,” he neglects to acknowledge the thousands of US military personnel who continue to serve “advisory” roles in Iraq as well as the countless military contractors that continue to work in conflict zones.

October 22, 2014

A federal jury in Washington convicts four Blackwater employees for the murder of 14 innocent Iraqi civilians in Baghdad’s Nisour Square in 2007.

December 9, 2014

The United States Senate Select Committee releases the “Committee Study of the Central Intelligence Agency’s Detention and Interrogation Program,” a 525 page report assessing the CIA’s use of detention and torture between 2001 and 2006. Among the key findings of the report is that the CIA’s torture techniques yielded no productive or reliable intelligence.

December 28, 2014

The United States formally declares the end of America’s war in Afghanistan and introduces a new military mission named “Resolute Support”. This new military mission requires that 11,000 US soldiers remain in Afghanistan to offer training and expertise to Afghanistan’s military. So even as America’s longest war comes to a formal end, the power and violence of the US military continues to be exercised in Afghan territories and battlefields.

2015

September, 2015

The USMC publishes a 1000-page study that concludes that all-male military units are faster, more lethal, and able to evacuate casualties in less time than mixed military units. The study becomes an integral resource for arguments against gender equality in the US military’s combat units.

October 3, 2015

A U.S. airstrike bombs a charity hospital in Afghanistan administered by Doctors Without Borders. At least 13 staff members and 10 patients were killed.

October 9, 2015

A federal courtroom in Tucson, Arizona arraigned a U.S. border patrol agent, Lonnie Ray Swartz, on the charges of shooting and murdering 16-year-old Mexican national, José Antonio Elena Rodríguez. This is the first time that a US federal court has ever tried a US border patrol agent for murder.

November, 2015

In the wake of November 13th terrorist attacks in Paris that killed approximately 130 people, President Obama announced that the US will strengthen its military operations abroad in the fight against ISIS.

December 3, 2015

In a monumental and unprecedented policy change, the Pentagon announced that all front-line ground combat positions can be served by both men and woman.

2016

July 6, 2016

A 6000-page report led by retired civil servant John Chilcot concludes that Britain – and Tony Blair in particular – rushed into the Iraq war before a range of peaceful options were exhausted.

June 30, 2016

The Pentagon declares that transgender troops can now serve openly within the ranks.

December, 2016

President Obama commutes Chelsea Manning's incarceration.

2016

January, 2017

President Trump signs a range of executive orders that authorize (1) an increase in military operations abroad, (2) a lifting of key environmental policies used to govern domestic agencies' toxic output, (3) a remilitarized wall across the US-Mexico border, and (4) a ban on Muslim and refugee migration to the United States.

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Bryan Thomas Walsh

EDUCATION	Indiana University, Bloomington, IN USA PhD, Dept. of Communication and Culture, 2017. Concentration: Rhetoric and Public Culture, Cultural Studies Dissertation: "The Viscera of Dissident Memory: Remembering Military Violence in 21 st Century American War Culture" Committee: Dr. John Louis Lucaites (Advisor), Dr. Robert Ivie, Dr. Robert Terrill, Dr. Edward Linenthal
	Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY USA M.A., Dept. of Communication and Rhetorical Studies, 2009. Concentration: Rhetorical Studies Thesis: " <i>Regime Du (Sa)Voir</i> and the Subjection of the Body: Toward a Critical Visual Rhetoric of the Body." Received the 2009 Award for Outstanding Master's Thesis from the Masters Education Section of the National Communication Association. Committee: Dr. Anne Teresa Demo (Adviser), Dr. Bradford Vivian, Dr. Kendall Phillips, Dr. Roger Hallas
	University of Puget Sound, Tacoma, WA USA B.A., Department of Communication Studies, 2007. Concentration: Communication Studies and Religion Studies Advisors: Dr. Derek Buescher, Dr. A. Susan Owen, Dr. James Jasinski, Dr. Dexter Gordon
ACADEMIC & PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS	AllenComm, Salt Lake City, UT USA Performance Consultant, Courseware Department, Fall '16 – Present.
	Indiana University, Bloomington, IN USA Association Instructor, Dept. Of Communication and Culture, Fall '09 – Spring '16.
	Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY USA Teaching Assistant, Dept. of Communication and Rhetorical Studies, Fall '07 – Spring '09.
	University of Puget Sound, Tacoma, WA USA Course Assistant, Dept. of Communication Studies, Spring '07.
TEACHING EXPERIENCE	Associate Instructor, "Public Memory in Communication and Culture" (C-355), Indiana University, Summer '13. Associate Instructor, "Speech Composition" (C-323), Indiana University, Fall '12 – Spring '13. Associate Instructor, "Introduction to Communication and Culture" (C-205), Indiana University, Fall '11 – Spring '12. Associate Instructor, "Argumentation and Advocacy" (C-228), Indiana University, Fall '10 – Spring '11. Associate Instructor, "Public Speaking" (C-121), Indiana University, Fall '09 – Spring '10. Teaching Assistant, "Concepts and Perspectives of Rhetoric" (CRS-183), Syracuse

University, Spring '09.
Teaching Assistant, "Foundation of Communication Inquiry" (CRS-287), Syracuse University, Fall '08.

Instructor, "Presentational Speaking" (CRS-325), Syracuse University, Fall '07 – Spring 08.
Course Assistant, "Science and Equality" (COMM-110), University of Puget Sound, Spring '07.

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed Journals:

Bryan Thomas Walsh, "Metonymic Reductions, Ironic Deployments, and the Possibility of Dissident Rituals for Commemorating Dead U.S. Soldiers in Post-9/11 American Public Culture," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* (In review)

Book Chapters:

Bryan Thomas Walsh, "Commemorative Containment and Forgetting Histories of Toxic Military Violence at the Kelly Air Force Base," in *Communicative Perspectives on Militarism*, ed., Erin Sahlstein (Taylor and Francis, 2014).

Online Articles, Internet Newsletters, Blog Entries:

Bryan Thomas Walsh, "The Art of Defiance," *No Caption Needed: The Blog*, May 4th, 2013. Available at <http://www.nocaptionneeded.com/2012/05/the-art-of-defiance/>

Bryan Thomas Walsh, "Reading the Ruins of an Ephemeral State," *No Caption Needed: The Blog*, July 22nd, 2011. Available at <http://www.nocaptionneeded.com/2011/07/ephemeral-state/>

Book Reviews:

Bryan Thomas Walsh, Review of Christina R. Foust. *Transgression as a Mode of Resistance: Rethinking Social Movement in an Era of Corporate Globalization*, *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 15 (2012).

Bryan Thomas Walsh, Review of Ariella Azoulay. *The Civil Contract of Photography*, *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 97 (2011), 465-468.

Bryan Thomas Walsh, Review of Jennifer R. Ballengee. *The Wound and The Witness: The Rhetoric of Torture*, *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 96 (2010), 112-114.

SCHOLARSHIP IN PROGRESS

Bryan Thomas Walsh, "21st Century American Military Geographies and the Memories of War-Torn Bodies: The Case of Camp Lejeune." To be submitted to *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* in Fall of 2013.

Bryan Thomas Walsh, "No Se Olvide: The Militarization of Mexico-US Borders and Latino/a Migrant Memorials Against Military Violence." To be submitted to *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* in Fall of 2013.

GRANTS & FELLOWSHIPS

"Alta Graduate Scholarship," (300.00), Alta Conference on Argumentation, American Forensic Association, 2013.

Travel Grant Award, (\$300.00), Department of Communication and Culture, Indiana University, 2011.

Travel Grant Award, (\$200.00), Department of Communication and Culture, Indiana University, 2010.

Summer Fellowship (\$500.00), College of Visual and Performing Arts, Syracuse University, 2008.

Travel Grant Award (\$800.00), College of Visual and Performing Arts, Syracuse University, 2007 – 2009.

'Cuse Fellowship (\$2,000.00), Department of Communication and Rhetorical Studies, Syracuse University, 2007.

**COMPETITIVE
AWARDS &
HONORS**

"2012 Teaching Award," awarded by the Department of Communication and Culture in recognition of excellence in teaching "Introduction to Communication and Culture" (C205).

"Top Student Paper in Rhetoric and Public Address," awarded by the Rhetoric and Public Affairs Division at the annual Southern States Communication Conference, San Antonio, Tx, 2012.

Placed on the "Top Student Papers in Performance Studies" panel, awarded by the Performance Studies Division at the annual Southern States Communication Conference, San Antonio, Tx, 2012.

"Top Competitive Papers in Communication and Philosophy," awarded by the Communication and Philosophy Division at the annual Eastern States Communication Association Conference, Baltimore, Ma, 2010.

"Top Paper Award in Rhetoric and Public Address," awarded by the Rhetoric and Public Address Division at the annual Eastern States Communication Association Conference, Baltimore, Ma, 2010.

"The 2009 Award for Outstanding Master's Thesis," awarded by the Masters Education Section of the National Communication Association in recognition of an elite body of scholarship conducted at the Master's level.

"The 2009 Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award," awarded by Syracuse University in recognition of teaching assistants who have made distinguished pedagogical contributions to the University.

"J. Calvin Callaghan Award for the Outstanding Graduate Student," 2009. Awarded by the Department of Communication and Rhetorical Studies in recognition of the outstanding graduate student in communication and rhetorical studies as demonstrated by both scholarly and teaching excellence.

"Certificate in University Teaching," 2009. Awarded by the "Future Professoriate Project" at Syracuse University in recognition of excellence in professional preparation for an academic career.

"Future Professoriate Award," 2009. Awarded by Syracuse University in recognition of students who successfully completed the Future Professoriate Program.

"W.H. Baisinger Outstanding Graduate Award," 2007. Awarded by the Department of Communication Studies at the University of Puget Sound for excellence in academic performance.

"Top Student Paper," awarded by Undergraduate Scholars Research Symposium at the annual Western States Communication Association Conference, Seattle, Wa., 2007.

"Michael P. Madden Research Award," 2007. Awarded by Department of Communication Studies at the University of Puget Sound in recognition of one graduating senior's excellence in communication inquiry and research.

"John Gravatt Art & Music Award," 2007. Awarded by the School of Art and Music at the University of Puget Sound in recognition for producing an outstanding essay broadly related to the arts.

"Dean's List," Determined by the University of Puget Sound Honor's Program, 2007.

CONFERENCE "Histories of State-Sanctioned Toxic Violence and the Corporeality of Dissident Memory," presented at the American Studies Association, Washington D.C., November 2013. **PRESENTATIONS**

"Rhetorical Norms of 21st-Century US Military Culture and Forgetting Histories of State-Sanctioned Violence at US-Mexico Borderlands," presented at the National Communication Association, Washington, D.C., November 2013.

"Disturbing Technocratic Arguments and Dissident Commemoration of Toxic Military Violence: The Case of the US Defense Depot in Memphis, Tennessee," Presented at the Alta Conference on Argumentation, Alta, Ut, August 2013.

"Corporeal Vulnerabilities and Dissent from Military Violence," presented at the Southern States Communication Association, Louisville, Ky, April 2013.

"Temporalities and Spatialities of Toxic Military Violence," Presented at Landscape, Space, and Place Conference, Bloomington, In, March 2013.

"Rhetorical Critique of Quotidian Military Violence: Post-911 American Communities Resist Military Toxicity," Presented at Western States Communication Association, Reno, Nv, February 2013.

"Environmental Justice and Anti-War Dissent: A Proposal," Presented at the Midwest Winter Workshop, Bloomington, In, January 2013.

"War Memorials, Metonyms of Dead Soldiers, and the Delimitation of Commemoration and Mourning," presented at the Rhetoric Society of America Biennial Conference, Philadelphia, Pa, May 2012.

"Invisible Archives and the Politics of Lynching Photographs," presented at the Rhetoric Society of America Biennial conference, Philadelphia, Pa, May 2012.

"Commemorating War, Mourning "the Fallen," and the Production of Political Relationality at the Arlington West Memorial," presented at the Southern States Communication Association, San Antonio, Tx, April 2012. *Selected as a "Top Student Paper" by the Rhetoric and Public Affairs Division.*

"Embodied Appropriation of Archival Photography: The Case of the Moore's Ford Lynching Reenactment," presented at the Southern States Communication Association, San Antonio, Tx, April 2012. *Placed on the "Top Student Papers in Performance Studies" panel by the Performance Studies Division.*

"The Politics of Mourning and Commemorating the Death of U.S. Soldiers: A Juxtaposition of the Arlington National Cemetery and the Arlington West Memorial," presented at the Western States Communication Association, Albuquerque, Nm, February 2012.

"Lynching Reenactments as Commemorative Counter-Practice," presented at the Midwest Winter Workshop, Madison, Wi, January 2012.

"Tropes of Torture," presented at the National Communication Association, New Orleans, La, November 2011.

"Embodied Reenactments of Waterboarding and the Possibilities for Anti-War Dissent," presented at the Midwest Winter Workshop, Iowa City, Ia, January 2011.

"Toward a Critical *Visual* Rhetoric of the Body," presented at the National Communication Association, San Francisco, Ca, November 2010.

"*Regime Du (Sa)Voir* and the Subjection of the Body," presented at the Eastern States Communication Association, Baltimore, Ma, April 2010. *Selected as a "Top Competitive Paper" by the Philosophy of Communication Division.*

"Rhetorical Displays of Tortured Bodies: Image Events, the Body-In-Pain, and Visual Tactics of Resistance," presented at the Eastern States Communication Association, Baltimore, Ma, April 2010. *Selected as a "Top Paper" by the Rhetoric and Public Affairs Division.* .

"Deploying Displays of the Tortured 'Gitmo' Body," presented at the Michigan Association for Speech Communication, Macomb, MI, October 2009.

"Tortured Body as Site/Sight of Resistance," presented at The Rocky Mountain Communication Association, Laramie, WY, April 2009.

"Remembering 'African Atrocity': Whiteness, Memory, and the Rhetoric of Film," presented at The Visible Memories Conference, Syracuse University, NY, October, 2008.

"'Knowledge Spins Where Once Larva Was Formed': 'Body Worlds' as the Anti-Memorial of Identity Politics," presented at William A. Kern Conference on Visual Communication: Rhetorics and Technology, Rochester Institute of Technology, NY, April, 2008.

"Visual Forgetting and Abjection: A Visual Rhetorical Analysis of Exigency Resolution," presented at Memory and Medium: Experience, Exchange, Representation, Ottawa, CA, March, 2008.

"Exhibiting the Body Anonymous: A Rhetorical Analysis of the Positioning of Corpses," presented at the Sooner Communication Conference, Oklahoma University, OK, March, 2008.

"Constitutive Rhetoric in *Hamden v. Rumsfeld*," presented at the Northwest Communication Association Convention, Coeur d'Alene, ID, April 2007.

"Rhetorical Analysis of Electronically-Mediated Games: An Extension of Burke's Representative Anecdote," presented at the Western States Communication Association Undergraduate Scholars Research Conference, Seattle, WA, February, 2007. *Selected as a "Top Student Paper" by the undergraduate division of WSCA.*

"A Love Story in the City of Dreams: A Symptomatic Analysis of Lynch's *Mulholland Dr.*," presented at the Western States Communication Association, Seattle, WA, February 2007.

"Is God an American? An Ideological Analysis of *Quantum Leap*," presented at the Northwest Communication Association Convention, Coeur d'Alene, ID, April 2006.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Journals:

Editorial Intern, *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 2009-2010.

Conference Reviewer, the Western States Communication Association, 2012-Present.

Conference Reviewer, the Rhetorical Society of America, 2012-Present.

Associations:

Reviewer, Rhetoric Society of America, 2013 – Present.

Reviewer, Rhetoric and Communication Theory Division, National Communication Association, 2013 – Present.

Conference Assistant, *National Communication Association Annual Convention*, San Diego, CA., 2009.

Department: Graduate Representative to the Hiring Committee, Department of Communication and Culture, Indiana University, IN, Fall 2013.

Graduate Representative and Liaison e Faculty, Department of Communication and Rhetorical Studies, Syracuse University, NY. Spring 2008 – Spring 2009.

Conference Assistant and Panel Chair, *Visible Memories Conference*, Syracuse University, Oct. 2-4, 2008.

Judge, SkillsUSA, *New York State Conference*, North Syracuse, NY, 2008.

Research Assistant, The 15th Ward Memory Project, Dept. of Communication and Rhetorical Studies at Syracuse Univ., 2007-2009.

Student-At-Large, Media Board at the University of Puget Sound, 2006.

PROFESSIONAL National Communication Association, 2007 – Present.

AFFILIATIONS Western Communication Association, 2007 – Present.

& MEMBERSHIPS American Studies Association, 2013 – Present.

Southern Communication Association, 2011 – Present.

Rhetoric Society of America, 2009 – Present.

Future Professorial Program (FPP), 2007 – Present.

REFERENCES

Dr. John Louis Lucaites Professor Dept. of Communication and Culture Indiana University Classroom Office Building, 800 E. 3 rd St. Bloomington, IN 47405 lucaites@indiana.edu	Dr. Robert L. Ivie Professor Dept. of Communication and Culture Dept. of American Studies Indiana University Classroom Office Building, 800 E. 3 rd St. Bloomington, IN 47405 rivie@indiana.edu
Dr. Phaedra Pezzullo Professor Dept. of Communication and Culture Indiana University Classroom Office Building, 800 E. 3 rd St. Bloomington, IN 47405 pezzullo@indiana.edu	Dr. Robert Terrill Professor Dept. of Communication and Culture Indiana University Classroom Office Building, 800 E. 3 rd St. Bloomington, IN 47405 rterrill@indiana.edu
Dr. Edward Linenthal Professor Dept. of History Indiana University Ballantine Hall, Rm. 808 Bloomington IN 47405 etl@indiana.edu	Dr. Anne Teresa Demo Assistant Professor Dept. of Communication and Rhetorical Studies Syracuse University 100 Sims Hall, Building V Syracuse, NY 13244 atdemo@syr.edu

<p>Dr. Bradford Vivian Professor Dept. of Communication and Rhetorical Studies Syracuse University 100 Sims Hall, Building V Syracuse, NY 13244 bvivian@syr.edu</p>	<p>Dr. Kendall Phillips Professor and Chair Dept. of Communication and Rhetorical Studies Syracuse University 100 Sims Hall, Building V Syracuse, NY 13244 kphillip@syr.edu</p>
<p>Dr. James Jasinski Professor and Chair Department of Communication Studies 1500 N. Warner St. CMB 1026 Tacoma, WA 98416-1026 jjasinski@pugetsound.edu</p>	<p>Dr. A Susan Owen Professor Department of Communication Studies 1500 N. Warner St. CMB 1026 Tacoma, WA 98416-1026 sowen@pugetsound.edu</p>